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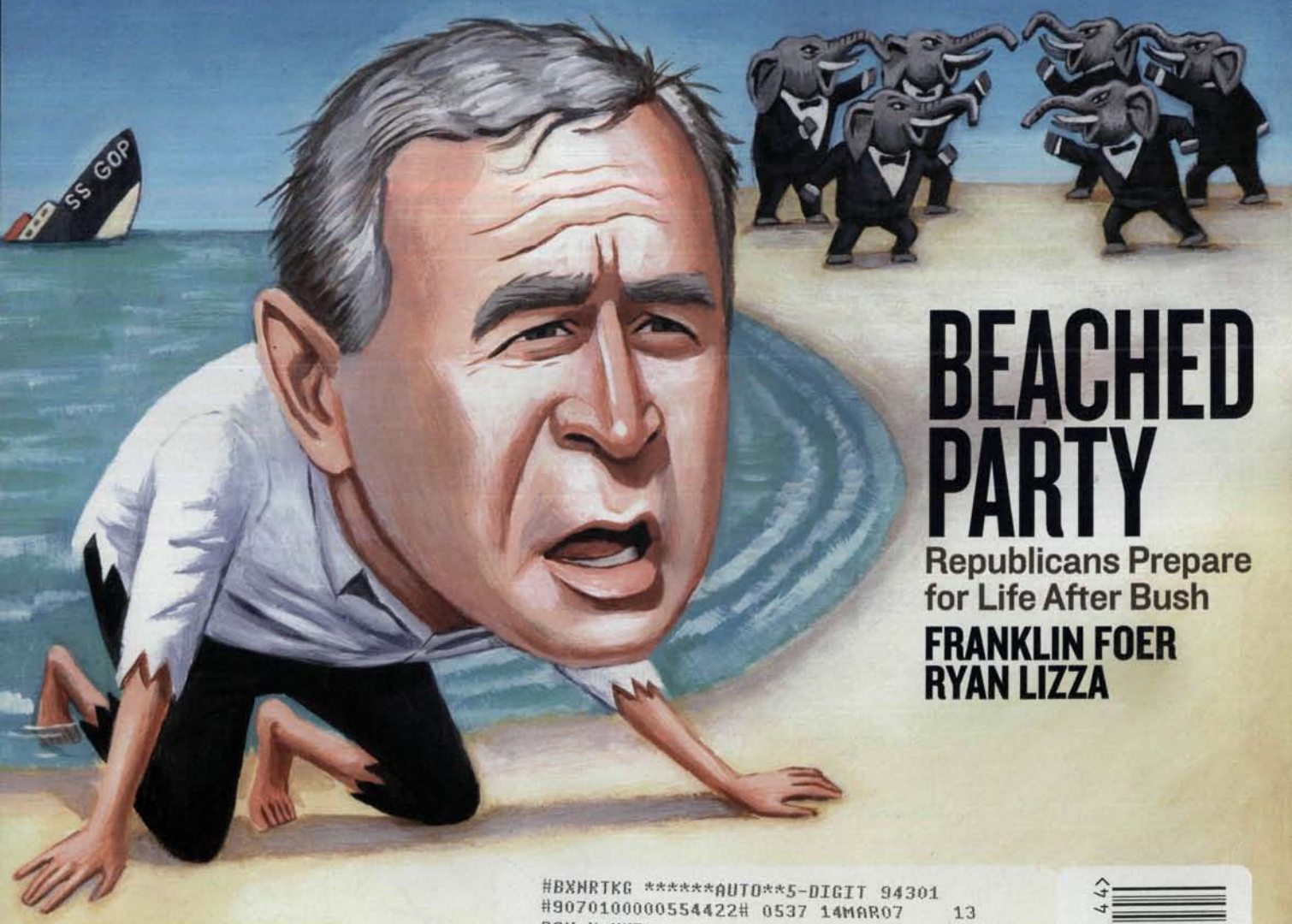

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Republicans Prepare for Life After Bush

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CORRESPONDENCE

DEATH AND TAXES

DOUGLAS MCGRAY ILLUSTRATES some problems resulting from our lack of a coherent disaster policy ("After Shock," September 26). One fix might come in the form of state disaster-mitigation authorities charged with working with scientists, engineers, emergency managers, the private sector, and the public to assess hazards and develop comprehensive and cost-effective plans. These authorities would be given taxing and bonding authority to fund needed measures. They could also develop tax incentives to subsidize insurance programs for needs that go uncovered by private insurance. A starting model might be New Zealand's Earthquake Commission, which covers residential property for damage by earthquakes, landslides, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, storms, and floods—or fires caused by any of these. It has $4.5 billion in reserves backed by reinsurance and a government guarantee. After the recent hurricanes, the public is likely to overcome hostility to increasing taxes for such clearly defined goals. Californians might even sacrifice their cherished property tax cap for safer hospitals and schools.

SETH STEIN
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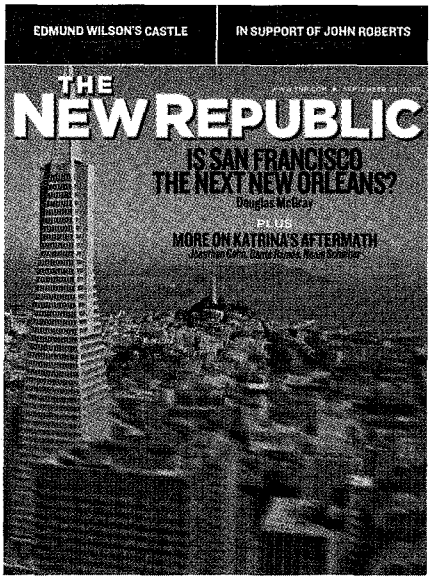
Department of Geological Sciences
Northwestern University
Evanston, Illinois

ELECTION RACE

HEATHER GERKEN'S IDEAS ABOUT electoral politics won't work in the real world ("Race (Optional)," September 26). Gerken argues that the preclearance provision of Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act scheduled to expire in 2007—the one that currently requires all or parts of 16 states to go hat-in-hand to the federal government before any election procedures can be changed—should be reworked to allow civil rights groups the power to request that their local jurisdictions be opted-in to government supervision if they believe they are threatened by a proposed election modification, such as redistricting. Unless this opt-in provision is extended to every state in the country, the act is still a grave constitutional infringement targeted at Texas,



but not Arkansas; Arizona, but not New Mexico; and Brooklyn, but not Queens. Yet, more important, it is difficult to believe that civil rights advocacy groups will not cross the line from civil rights protection into raw partisan politics, objecting to any change that may weaken their partisan advantage. It is nearly impossible today to tease out racial electoral issues from partisan electoral issues, all of which proves that you can't take politics out of politics.

EDWARD BLUM
Visiting Fellow
American Enterprise Institute
Washington, D.C.

HEATHER GERKEN RESPONDS:
Edward Blum suggests that I incorrectly answered a question I never addressed—how Congress should decide which jurisdictions must comply with Section 5. He is right that the constitutionality of Section 5's coverage formula is sure to be litigated. No matter which jurisdictions Congress chooses to target, however, the type of flexible, locally informed, and targeted enforcement strategy I proposed only increases the chance that Section 5 will pass constitutional muster. Blum is also correct that we can't take politics out of voting rights enforcement. Politics has been intertwined with efforts to disenfranchise racial minorities at least since Reconstruction, and those enforcing Section 5 have seen civil rights issues with partisan implications since the passage of the Voting Rights Act. The question is whether we should try to harness partisan energies in the service of civil rights—creating incentives for civil rights organizations and partisan officials alike to do the right thing—or simply give up on the cause of voting rights enforcement altogether.

DOUBLE-TROUBLE

NOAM SCHEIBER WRITES, "YOU CAN either slash the bureaucracy and refund taxpayers' money, or you can reconcile yourself to the existence of bureaucracy and run it as a patronage operation" ("Friends," September 26). But consider a third possibility: You could also, quite deliberately, turn your own belief system into a self-fulfilling prophesy by appointing incompetents to key positions so that the resulting mess can be portrayed as confirmation of your belief in the inherent impotence of bureaucracy itself. In the short term, this is, in effect, simply a patronage operation, until or unless a particular agency is called upon to deal with some crisis or emergency event; the result, though, is that it so destroys public confidence in the bureaucracies that, eventually, they will be dismantled and their functions privatized.

VICKI TERRELL
Dunwoody, Georgia

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"THE METH EPIDEMIC ...AMERICA'S MOST DANGEROUS DRUG"

-- Newsweek[1]

METHAMPHETAMINE CRISIS: HYPE OR FACT?

"This is the beginning of a classic scare where you have horrible anecdotes substituted for epidemiological evidence and the media going with these easy stories," says Dr. Craig Reinarman of the University of California. "You don't want to mistake the worst case scenarios for the norm but that is what happens and it's true of every drug scare."[2]

IS USE EXPANDING?

The federal government's own numbers show that "Incidence of methamphetamine use generally rose between 1992 and 1998. Since then, there have been no statistically significant changes."[3]

HOW MANY METH USERS ARE THERE?

About 5% of Americans older than 12 have tried the drug. About 0.3% have actually used it in the last month, versus 0.1% for heroin and 1.0% for cocaine.[4]

CAN METH BE TREATED SUCCESSFULLY?

Research shows successful treatment requires a significant commitment of time and resources as well as patience.[5,6,7]

HOW BIG IS THE "HOME COOKING" PROBLEM?

Illegal activity is tough to measure but some officials estimate that about 20% of domestic meth consumption comes from the small-scale domestic labs using cold medications and other household materials.[8]

HOW EFFECTIVE ARE RESTRICTIONS ON "HOME COOKING" CHEMICALS?

Since Oklahoma restricted the sale of cold and allergy medicines officials report a 90% drop in meth lab seizures. Unfortunately the Mexican cartels immediately filled the gap. Seizures of a purer, smokeable form of methamphetamine known as "ice" are up 500%.[9]

Policy Should Reflect Facts, Not Hype!

COMMON SENSE FOR DRUG POLICY
H. Michael Gray, Chair; Robert E. Field, Co-Chair
www.CSDP.org, www.DrugWarFacts.org, www.DrugWarDistortions.org

1. Newsweek, Aug. 8, 2005. 2. "The Methamphetamine Epidemic – Less Than Meets The Eye," Drug War Chronicle, Aug. 5, 2005. 3. Results from the 2003 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, SAMHSA (2004). 4. Ibid. 5. Rawson, Richard A., et al., "A multi-site comparison of psychological approaches for the treatment of methamphetamine dependence," Addiction, No. 99, pp. 708-717. 6."The Matrix Model of Outpatient Stimulant Abuse Treatment: History and Description," Obert, Jeanne L., et al., Journal of Psychoactive Drugs, April-June 2000. 7. Methamphetamine Treatment Project at http://www.methamphetamine.org/ . 8. Commissioner Michael Campion, Minnesota Department of Public Safety, US House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy & Human Resources, June 27, 2005. 9. "Stopping Meth Makers Hasn't Stopped Oklahoma's Meth Problems," AP July 28, 2005.

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Proxy Fight

TRB FROM WASHINGTON

If Harriet Miers didn't exist, conservatives would need to invent her. Five years into the Bush administration, they are stuck with an uncomfortable fact: They have fervently supported a president who has not only failed to deliver many lasting victories to their movement, but who has also saddled the reputation of the American right with what will (in all likelihood) be regarded as a losing war.

That's not to say that they don't have sound reasons for howling about President Bush's lackey-cum-nominee. The selection of a bona fide movement devotee—with time served in the anti-leftist Federalist Society, as opposed to the cursed American Bar Association—would have certainly won applause from current kvetchers like *National Review* and Senator Sam Brownback. But conservatives have responded to Miers with fury—indeed, many have been subconsciously hoping for such a provocation—because they need a pretext to begin divorce proceedings against Bush and, more important, his war.

Well before the Miers nomination, the conservative antiwar movement had evinced signs of growth. From the start of the Iraq invasion, a handful of conservative dissidents quietly expressed discomfort with the president's project. Modern-day conservatism, after all, has its roots in the "anti-interventionist" campaigns of the 1930s and the writings of antiwar libertarians like Albert Jay Nock and Garet Garett. (As a boy, William F. Buckley named his first sailboat *Sweet Isolation*.) So Old Right intellectuals like those clustered around Pat Buchanan emerged as predictable grumblers. These malcontents were soon joined by some mainstream conservatives, like columnist George Will, who have come to consider the administration's attempted renovation of the Middle East so utopian that it pains every Burkean bone in their body. "I supported the war and now I feel foolish," talk-show host Tucker Carlson told *The New York Times* last year.

Lately, this coterie of the war's critics has grown to include its most vocal exproponents. These hawks—from nationalists like *National Review* Editor Rich Lowry to the war's neoconservative architects—have taken tentative steps toward formulating their own explanations of what went wrong in Iraq. But they haven't shown any signs of rethinking the wisdom of the invasion. Instead, they focus their complaints on ham-fisted execution. In his exit interview with *The Washington Post* in July, the outgoing Pentagon official Douglas Feith chastised the administration for failing to provide sufficient prewar military training for Iraqi exiles and Kurds. "My views were generally in favor of transferring responsibility to the Iraqis earlier," he said. (Or to translate: No Chalabi, No Peace!) *Weekly Standard* Editor William Kristol has harped on missteps committed by the gutless civilian incompetents at the Pentagon. "[The president] needs to assert control over them, overrule them, or replace them," Kristol wrote last summer. (Or to translate: Bush should have canned Rummy and listened to me!) And there's no better evidence of war supporters psychologically distancing themselves from the war than an interview Paul Wolfowitz granted last month to the *Financial Times*. Instead of robustly pleading with the nation to stay the course or delivering Churchillian predictions of victory, he limply asserted, "I still think that what the U.S., U.K., and others did for Iraq was the right thing and done for the right reasons. And, hopefully, it's going to turn out the right way."

And so the intramural debate over Iraq remains mostly submerged, buried in qualifications and cant. These if-the-czar-only-knew complaints are a sort of hedge, protecting conservatives from the ridicule they would endure for flip-flopping. Besides, the war—and the accompanying image of Bush as a clear-eyed and indispensable commander—is so central to recent Republican political success that most conservatives are loath to criticize it directly. (What's more, they have spent the past few years dismissing the war's detractors as "defeatist"—a line of attack that doesn't allow for conservatives to be, well, defeatist.) But their submerged frustration was bound to erupt somewhere, and, in the hapless Miers, it has finally found an outlet.

The Miers nomination has transformed the atmosphere in the conservative press, which had, until now, resolutely refrained from speaking ill of the White House. Such feelings of betrayal over the Supreme Court could embolden a more forthright, more public discussion of Bush and his policy, including the admission that the president's Iraqi missteps are irredeemable. Ronald Reagan's White House counsel, Peter J. Wallison, now at the American Enterprise Institute, wrote in *National Review Online* last week, "[F]rom what I'm hearing from my conservative friends, this nomination seems to have a last-straw quality."

As the Feith and Kristol arguments suggest, the coming conservative break over Iraq will sound a lot like the Harriet Miers battle: Just as the president has shown excessive loyalty to his White House counsel, he has blindly looked past the failings of close allies like Donald Rumsfeld, Ricardo Sanchez, and L. Paul Bremer. When the president embarked on his fool's errands—nominating an unqualified hack and stiffing sympathetic Iraqi allies like Ahmed Chalabi—he bull-headedly refused to reconsider and shift to a more prudent course. If only he had bothered to commune with the vast ranks of genuine experts in conservative intelligentsia, he wouldn't have ended up in such a pickle.

That the Miers controversy would become a proxy for the war isn't surprising. During the last five years, the war on terrorism has achieved a significance that comes close to anti-communism's centrality to cold war conservatism. It has provided the ballast for the right's coalition—the common belief uniting such disparate cohorts as budget hawks, religious conservatives, and foreign policy nationalists. In a way, the war provides the subtext for every political debate these days.

This coming debate over the war will have far greater significance for the future of conservatism than the Miers nomination. After Iraq, what will hold the conservative coalition together? Will the coming moment provide an opening for a resurgence of isolationism or a far less strident brand of realism? Miers could prove to be the little lady who starts the big war.

FRANKLIN FOER

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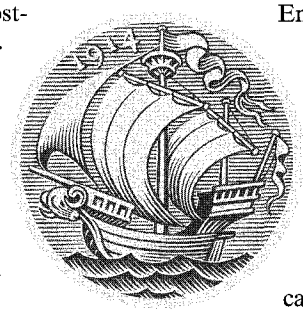
A Constitution

"THE REMARKABLE THING about the terror in Iraq," Fouad Ajami recently wrote in *The Wall Street Journal*, "is the silence with which it is greeted in other Arab lands." There is a second, even more remarkable thing about the terror in Iraq: the silence with which it is greeted in many Western countries, including the United States. Too many people speak of the insurgency in Iraq not just as a security problem and an obstacle to political progress, but as if the Sunni jihadists and their Baathist comrades of convenience constitute a legitimate resistance to some brutal tyranny intent on stealing sovereignty from its rightful owners. The insurgency in Iraq is not just a practical problem. It is the new expression of the old hostility to freedom.

More concretely, it is the work of a sullen caste of Sunni Arabs who cruelly ruled their Kurdish and Shia countrymen. Some count this barbarous regime back 30-odd years before the toppling of the tyrant's bronze statue in a Baghdad square. But, in truth, it was Great Britain and the League of Nations that launched Iraq after World War I, pasting it together from three previously unrelated Ottoman provinces, under a Sunni king they imported from the Hijaz—a descendant of the prophet, no less—as a consolation prize for losing Arabia to the marauding house of Saud (and for the French having cut short his reign as king of Syria). There begins the modern history of Mesopotamia, a fiendish one that ended only in 2003.

The intervening years have been, to say the least, marked by chaos and difficulty—over which many mischievous critics have gloated. But even those who still have hope for Iraq after Saddam Hussein must acknowledge that the Bush administration bears some responsibility for the torments of recent years. Just as it failed to produce a compelling and consistent rationale for the war, the administration did not prepare a political draught adequate to a polity riven by ethnic, tribal, and denominational bitterness. These ethnic and religious chasms magnified every problem in Iraq, from the lack of electricity to the lack of jobs. Maybe these divisions were always insurmountable; but, if the administration was serious about democratizing Iraq, it should have had a plan for dealing with them.

It has been axiomatic from the beginning that the Sunnis (and, some insisted, even the Baathists) needed to be brought into the post-Saddam political process. Otherwise, Iraq could not return to normality. But Iraq was never normal. The problem apparently is that, to many Iraqi Sunnis, normality is dominance. It has become their habit, a habit reinforced by the Saudis and Egyptians intrusively proclaiming a Shia victory in Iraq an apostate menace to the entire Muslim world. But the Sunnis constitute only 20 percent of Iraq's population, so there is no getting around a Shia and Kurdish victory in the new Iraq.



Given all this, the ratification of the Iraqi constitution is a momentous step in the struggle for moderation, democracy, and order. It is worth recalling what might have transpired in place of this vote: After the colossal amount of innocent Shia blood shed first by a Sunni tyranny and then by widespread Sunni retaliation over its fall, the Shia might easily have unleashed a campaign of bitter revenge. But, while there have been revenge killings, the Shia leadership and the bulk of the Shia community have shown restraint given their fresh memories of oppression.

It is true that last weekend's vote had something of a shotgun character, speeded up to pacify those who are impatient with the slow movement of political history or those who wanted some sign that the American suzerain would soon withdraw. The terms for its success were formulated in its favor, and some fraud at the polls may have occurred. These are not trivial flaws. Still, nothing like these extended negotiations by elected representatives over a written compact for a ethnically plural population has ever taken place in the Arab world, not even in Lebanon. The lull in violence surrounding the election may even demonstrate that Sunni political groups that urged their followers to vote, like the Sunni Endowment and the Iraqi Islamic Party, are gaining on the jihadis. (The Sunnis, after all, are not monolithic.) In any case, the sight of Iraqis lined up, at great personal risk, to vote was as thrilling as when El Salvadoran peasants and South African blacks and Afghan women cast ballots that proclaimed, in effect, "I have a right to help decide," which is the real essence of democracy.

Soon, the trial of Saddam will be in full swing, reminding the world of the monstrous ways he treated and expended human life. And yet the monster himself will experience one of the benefits of America's intervention: He will have a fair trial. ■

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NOTEBOOK

SCOTT MCCLELLAN GETS AGGRESSIVE . . . MARK MCKINNON'S NO PROGRESSIVE

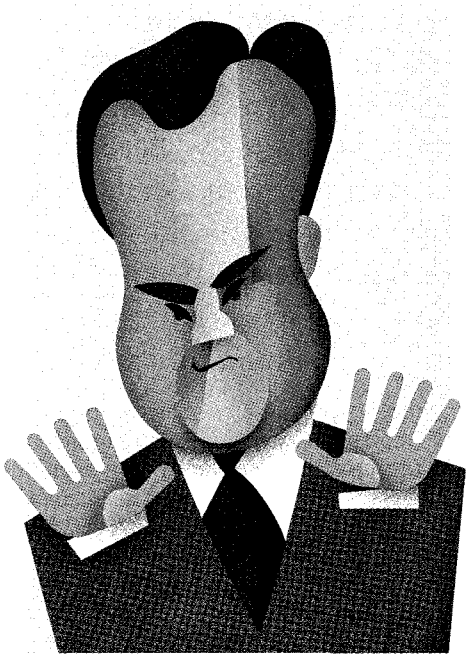
NO MORE MR. NICE GUY

WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY Scott McClellan is just not going to take it anymore. He's sick of reporters "trying to get under our skin and get us off-message." So he's decided to "mix it up a little bit." This new, tough-guy McClellan has surprised reporters. "He used to be nice-guy Scott who always gave the exact same answers, very polite. He's become increasingly feisty and increasingly confrontational with reporters," observed *The Washington Post*'s Jim VandeHei.

For instance, on October 13, when CBS correspondent John Roberts questioned whether Supreme Court nominee Harriet Miers had "the tenacity to weather this [confirmation] fight," McClellan got personal. "No, no, let's talk about how—the way you're approaching things. . . . She is exceptionally well-qualified. And I would encourage you—I know you don't necessarily want to do this—but to look at her qualifications and record." Touché.

McClellan also mixed it up with Hearst columnist Helen Thomas, who questioned the administration's strategy in Iraq. McClellan retorted: "Well, you have a very different view of the war on terrorism, and I'm sure you're opposed to the broader war on terrorism." Ouch.

And, shortly after Hurricane Katrina, NBC's David Gregory asked whether Bush still had confidence in his FEMA director and secretary of homeland security. McClellan said, "What you're doing is trying to engage in a game of finger-pointing—and blame-gaming. What we're trying to do is solve problems, David. And that's where we're going to keep our focus." There and, apparently, on accusing reporters of laziness and coddling terrorists. No doubt that will solve all the administration's problems.



Scott McClellan

A HACK FINDS A HOME

IN OUR OCTOBER 17 STORY ON THE worst hacks in the Bush administration, we reported on Bush crony Mark McKinnon, a former Democratic strategist who mysteriously converted to wholesale W-worship in the late 1990s ("Welcome to the Hackocracy," October 17). Bush recently nominated McKinnon for a *Democratic* slot on the Broadcasting Board of Governors. But, apparently, the embarrassment of attempting to fill one of four seats reserved for Democrats with a man whose company "accepted over $177 million in fees from Bush and the Republican National Committee" for the 2004 campaign became too much: On Monday, the administration withdrew McKinnon's nomination to replace Democrat Joaquin Blaya and renominated him for a Republican seat, formalizing his GOP credentials. Six years ago, when he was the media consultant for Bush's 2000 presidential campaign, McKinnon told *The New York Times* that he reckoned a major message of Bush's was that "it's not enough for our wallets to be full if our hearts are empty." It seems McKinnon has finally had to learn his boss's big lesson.

INTELLIGENCE OVERSIGHT

PAT ROBERTS, THE KANSAS REpublican who chairs the Senate intelligence committee, can be tenacious when he wants to be. In June, Roberts proposed an expansion of the Patriot Act to allow the FBI to subpoena information for intelligence or terrorism investigations—without judicial approval (see Spencer Ackerman, "Patriot Games," June 20). Roberts's measure ultimately failed in the Senate, but that hasn't stopped him. Aides told the *Times* that, with White House support, he plans to reinsert the provision in a reconciled House-Senate bill. He also dug in his heels on John McCain's anti-torture bill, becoming one of only nine senators to oppose the measure, a move that pleased the Bush administration. But, sometimes, Roberts seems strangely docile. For instance, Laura Rozen reported in *The American Prospect* that Roberts consulted closely with Dick Cheney over the scope of his investigation into the politicization of prewar Iraq intelligence—even though Cheney's office ought to be a focus of that investigation. He has called hearings to determine how well the CIA protects its undercover agents, but he has been oddly quiet about the possible White House role in outing one of those agents—Valerie Plame. And, despite proclaiming it his priority this year to oversee intelligence reforms, the CIA is still, as *The Washington Post* put it this week, "in turmoil," as veteran spymasters quit in disgust with Director Porter Goss. Where has Roberts been? Apparently, wherever the White House wants him.

DAVID COWLES

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THE NEW GRIDIRON CLUB

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is taking British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw on a three-day tour of her native Alabama this weekend, including a stop at Saturday's much-anticipated football game between rival universities Alabama and Tennessee. We recognize the diplomatic imperative of this trip. After all, tensions between the Crimson Tide and the Volunteers are ready to explode, especially since last year's revelation that Tennessee head coach Phillip Fulmer helped expose NCAA rules violations at Alabama, resulting in sanctions against the school. "I'd rather be in Baghdad than Birmingham," Fulmer said last year before skipping the Southeastern Conference's media days, partly out of concern for his safety. We hope Rice and Straw will be able to broker a peace. But, given their record in Iraq, we're not optimistic.

HAIL AND FAREWELL

Penn Kemble died of brain cancer on Sunday at age 64. He was a hero of American liberalism, even if many American liberals mistook him for something else. In 1972, after George McGovern led the Democratic Party to catastrophe, Kemble, a former activist in the Young People's Socialist League, launched the Coalition for a Democratic Majority, which fought to repudiate the isolationism of McGovern's followers. In the 1980s, he organized Democrats who wanted to oppose communism in Central America more forcefully, and, in the '90s, he helped run the U.S. Information Agency. Kemble's ideological trajectory paralleled that of many neoconservatives, but he never became one himself, remaining a social democrat to the end. Indeed, while he was already sick, he worked to prepare a conference paying tribute to the legacy of Sidney Hook. His ulterior motive, as all the participants understood, was to revive the social democratic spirit. As news of his illness spread, the event—which drew liberal academics, activists, and leaders—turned into a tribute to Kemble, one he richly deserved. He was a contributor to these pages during some of their most disputatious days, and he was a kind and smart and important man. We will miss him. ■

POSTCARD FROM THE EDGE

Parody by T.A. Frank

"I made sure in my last speech . . . to mention you . . . but I do not know what Al Jazeera broadcast. Did this part appear or not? . . . I have also had 15 audio statements published and six others that were not published for one reason or another." —Ayman Al Zawahiri, Al Qaeda's number-two man, in a 13-page letter, released last week by U.S. intelligence, to the head of Al Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Musab Al Zarqawi

In the name of God, praise be to God, and praise and blessings be upon the Messenger of God, his family, his coworkers, and his broker.

Dear Brother,

God only knows how much I would enjoy visiting you in Iraq. The only thing keeping me from packing my bags, donning a burqa, and slipping into a carrier sack on a westbound mule right now is that I'm tied up with promoting my latest book, *Man Behind the Mosque: Faith, Community and Discourse in Post-Bunker-Buster Waziristan* (334 pp., Madrassa Press, $28.95 Canadian). Did you happen to see me on "Charlie Rose"? I had you in mind when I sent in my threatening audiotape.

I hope the move is going well, and I would love to see a picture of your new house in Falluja. I am glad the old one had insurance, God be praised. I do hope that it has a comfortable recreation room, God permitting, and a spacious, windowless basement with good lighting for the Panasonic AG-DVC7 you were discussing.

However, I do, gracious brother, want to discuss one or two points about strategy and tactics, even as I recognize your pioneering role in decapitation research. In terms of ambition, your plan to explode every Shia in Iraq cannot be faulted for scope, but is it practicable? I worry that the Iranians and others visiting Najaf or Basra might pick up on clues, such as the absence of human life. Mind you, I sympathize entirely with your sentiments, but it might make more sense to focus primarily on the American infidels and to save the detonation of Shia for special occasions, such as birthdays.

The war we are fighting is primarily in the media. (Did you happen, by the way, to catch my videotape on Al Jazeera? Did I look OK? Please inform.) I come second to no one in my appreciation of a good hostage-execution video, but it seems, at least according to our preliminary focus group data, that the head-removal segment was not really resonating with viewers. (I should mention, though, that the blindfold-and-threat segment did receive a number of positive comments, praised be God.)

I know the American apostates are maddening, and, let me assure you, they have inconvenienced me as well. Recently, an American raid incinerated an irreplaceable video collection of every interview or panel discussion I've participated in since 1986. Another American inferno from the sky indirectly martyred my second-favorite wife, who was perforated by bits of flying goat. It would be wounding me gravely to suggest that I would not prefer to be martyring myself with you instead of doing this book tour in Tora Bora. All the same, while it is obvious to me that the just response to these outrages is to drop a few Shia children down a well, given the media angle, I recommend privately shooting a few hostages or perhaps working out.

Please send word when you can. If you should get imprisoned or interrogated, please remember that here in Waziristan, out East, where you train, the aspens will already be turning. They turn in clusters—partly because their roots connect them, partly because a recent volley of daisy-cutters has reduced them to charred stumps.

Peace, God's mercy, and blessings on you.

Your loving brother,
Ayman

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The end of Posse Comitatus?

Coup de Grâce

BY SPENCER ACKERMAN

OVER A DECADE ago, an Air Force lieutenant colonel mused about a military coup in the United States. In a widely praised 1992 essay in the Army War College journal *Parameters*, the officer, Charles J. Dunlap Jr., argued, in the form of a letter written far into the future, that elected officials would gradually and deliberately cede authority to the military for an increasing number of previously civilian functions. Eventually the generals, encouraged by public disgust with squabbling politicians, accepted the myth of their own infallibility and took the reins of state directly. Dunlap's deliberately hysterical essay was brought up repeatedly in the defense debates of the 1990s: Conservatives used it to criticize the Clinton administration's inattention to civil-military relations and its proclivity for using the military for nation-building in the Balkans; liberals responded that their opponents were failing to adjust to post–cold war military missions. Lost in the shuffle was the fact that one of the sparks for Dunlap's warning was the Sturm und Drang over an insufficient civilian response to Hurricane Andrew.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, President Bush has taken a position that looks like Dunlap on fast-forward. In a speech delivered from Jackson Square in New Orleans last month, Bush called for a vastly expanded military role in disaster relief, including "reconsideration" of a century-old law banning the active-duty military from law-enforcement duties. That law, the Posse Comitatus Act (PCA) of 1878, is widely considered to be a cornerstone in the development of U.S. liberty. Enacted after Reconstruction, when much of the South was under military occupation (and federal troops monitored political rallies and stood guard at polling places), it sought to prevent any subsequent use of the military to perform traditional police duties.

There's no evidence that the PCA had anything to do with the administration's bungled response to Hurricane Katrina. But Bush has cynically seized on the law to reverse the political damage wrought by his administration's incompetence. Civil libertarians are rightly concerned that eliminating the PCA would lead to abuses as the active-duty military begins supplementing civilian police—the slippery slope Dunlap warned about in 1992, when his protagonist wrote, "Faced with intractable national problems on one hand, and an energetic and capable military on the other, it can be all too seductive to start viewing the military as a cost-effective solution." And it's not just civil libertarians who are concerned. When I asked Bush's senior Pentagon official for homeland defense, Assistant Secretary Paul McHale, whether the PCA is a relic of an outmoded era, he immediately responded "absolutely not." And, last week, Admiral Timothy Keating, who heads U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM), told *The New York Times* that "I'm not at all convinced that we need to go back and revise Posse Comitatus."

What's worse, Bush's push to eliminate the PCA risks obscuring the legitimate and beneficial ways in which the military's role could be expanded, within existing laws and under civilian control, to bolster disaster relief. And some in the Pentagon, where homeland security missions are viewed with skepticism, conflate the debate over junking the PCA with these less radical options in order to scale back military involvement in homeland security. As a result, Bush's push to eliminate the PCA may be a classic case of one bad idea drowning out several good ones.

NO ONE BELIEVES Bush is laying the foundations for a military coup. Yet, over the last few weeks, you could be forgiven for thinking he had hired Dunlap's evil twin as his new speechwriter. In Jackson Square, Bush declared that "a challenge on this scale requires greater federal authority and a broader role for the Armed Forces." Later, his spokesman, Scott McClellan, clarified that the PCA was something that "needs to be looked at." (Similar sentiments were expressed the previous week by General Peter Pace, the new chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.) At the Energy Department last month, Bush—buoyed by support from John Warner, the Virginia Republican who chairs the Senate Armed Services Committee and who has been a PCA skeptic since September 11—added that he could envision "a scenario which would require federal assets to stabilize the situation, primarily DOD assets, and then hand back over to the Department of Homeland Security, for example." He further raised the stakes earlier this month by asking Congress to grant the active-duty military the power to quarantine patients in the event of a flu pandemic, something one public health expert called akin to "martial law in the United States." Again, McClellan elaborated that "the Department of Defense would assume the responsibility for the situation and come in with an overwhelming amount of resources and assets to help stabilize the situation."

Such growth in domestic military responsibilities reads like a step toward Dunlap's Coup of 2012, but you don't have to buy his nightmare scenario to believe revoking the PCA would be a reckless move. As McHale puts it, "Posse Comitatus was enacted in 1878 for reasons that remain largely valid today"—namely, the preservation of liberty that comes from restricting the active-duty military from civilian affairs and the need to ensure that the military concerns itself first and foremost with winning wars. "We separate military and law enforcement in the United States in order to protect both," says Tim Edgar, the counsel for na-

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tional security at the American Civil Liberties Union. "That's because the military doesn't have the function of executing the law with respect to constitutional rights." What's more, the open-ended use of federal troops for apprehending neighborhood car thieves and burglars represents the end of local police responsibilities—an essential element of federalism. "Posse Comitatus may be old, but it's old in the same way the Bill of Rights is old," Edgar continues. "It protects our liberties by setting out clearly what functions of our government belong to what agencies."

But it doesn't actually prevent the president from using the military in disaster relief. In fact, laws like the 1984 Stafford Act allow the president to use active-duty forces under FEMA authority after declaring a state of emergency. Additionally, non-active military units can engage in law-enforcement duties: National Guard forces under state command—as opposed to active-duty troops under federal jurisdiction—have been used throughout history to supplement overwhelmed police forces without detriment to civil liberties.

THE REAL OBSTACLE to more effective disaster relief isn't the PCA; it's the composition of the military itself. Three years after its establishment, NORTHCOM—the regional military command responsible for the continental United States—still doesn't have much in the way of designated military assets, such as aircraft or ships, that can facilitate rapid deployment of troops or civilian aid workers in the event of a catastrophic disaster. (To his credit, Keating is working on a plan to create a rapid-response active-duty force to assist Guardsmen in a domestic crisis.) That's part of the reason why, after Hurricane Katrina, it took nearly a week—an eternity for evacuees in the Superdome and elsewhere, where people suffered needlessly—to deploy enough troops to New Orleans.

Another structural problem is that the National Guard doesn't have sufficient capabilities for homeland security at a time when it is also expected to play a major role in fighting wars overseas. Neither of these woes is solved by scrapping the PCA. As Jim Carafano, a homeland security expert at the Heritage Foundation, wrote earlier this month, Katrina critics "miss the mark" in focusing on the PCA when the real challenge is "restructur[ing] the military so that it is better prepared to respond quickly." The ACLU's Edgar agrees. "One thing I think we should look at is how we can strengthen the National Guard so that it serves its appropriate function, to safeguard domestic security," he says, adding that there's no trouble with the active-duty military "providing logistical and humanitarian aid [or] for using its soldiers and its planes to assist the local government."

The active-duty military, however, doesn't necessarily want the job, and some—often for principled reasons—have warned against not just revising the PCA but also against expanding the military's role in homeland security. A *Defense News* op-ed last week warned that using Pentagon assets for hurricane relief was "setting a dangerous trend," last seen in the '90s, when "the military slowly started to outrank its civilian chain of command in influence, authority, and resources in many parts of the world." McHale rejects any suggestion—in particular, one I raised in a recent article ("Indefensible," September 19)—that the Defense Department is reluctant to take on homeland security missions, but he is circumspect about increased military involvement in disaster mitigation. "If we expect [Defense] to arrive on the scene in large numbers 24 hours after an event," says McHale, "we're going to have to significantly alter our force structure, training, and equipping of this department, and significantly reduce our expectations of response normally tasked to state and local governments under our federal system."

Plans like Keating's yet-to-be-finalized strategy, however, would hardly go so far. NORTHCOM envisages hundreds, not thousands, of specially trained and equipped active-duty forces able to deploy within 18 hours of a domestic emergency to augment Guard forces under state command. That would represent neither a demolition of warfighting prowess nor the death of federalism. Most importantly, it might save lives when the next catastrophe hits. "Faster deployment of the logistical, communications, engineering, and rescue capabilities of the Armed Forces" would be a perfectly appropriate mission, says Dunlap, now a brigadier general with the Air Combat Command. "That's the kind of thing where you're not going to get into conflicts with civil liberties."

OPPOSITION TO SCUTTLING the PCA hasn't just come from McHale and Keating. Their boss, Donald Rumsfeld, is decidedly unenthusiastic about the move. In a September 27 press conference, Rumsfeld pointedly called military-driven law enforcement "a very narrow piece of the task of dealing with a catastrophic difficulty or problem." But just as the defense secretary was distancing himself from Bush's PCA scheme, his Pentagon was asking Congress to change a mid-'70s privacy law so the Defense Intelligence Agency could conduct spying operations inside the United States—an authority forbidden to the CIA. Rumsfeld's desire to get involved in domestic intelligence collection suggests that he's not an anguished constitutionalist so much as simply disinterested in disaster relief.

McHale says the "whole system" failed during Hurricane Katrina, from New Orleans to Washington, as the dead and displaced proved. But there's more than one way to fail in the event of a domestic disaster, as the Bush administration seems intent on proving by simultaneously talking about junking century-old civil liberties protections and expressing skepticism about limited military measures that might actually make a difference. "When I reread my essay," says Dunlap, "I find it very eerie in light of today's circumstances." Eerie might be an understatement. ■

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Condi for president.

Cultivated Rice

BY MICHELLE COTTLE

CRYSTAL DUEKER VIVIDLY recalls the moment she was bitten by the Condi bug. "I was at the Republican convention in New York, where I was one of the alternates," the 50-year-old office manager recounts in her made-to-charm North Dakota accent. "We were probably a hundred feet away from Father Bush's box, where Barbara and the daughters were sitting. And, when I saw Condoleezza Rice walk in and exchange pleasantries and start hugging everybody, I thought, 'Oh my gosh, I think I'm looking at the next president of the United States.' "

A couple months later, a Miami physician, Richard Mason, experienced a similar epiphany. "It was after the 2004 election, and we were kind of having a break-room chat in the hospital where I work," he explains. "Nobody could really come up with a good 2008 candidate. Then somebody said, 'What about Condi Rice?' " For the bubbly, 45-year-old father of two kids (and three cats), "it was really just one of those 'Wow-I-coulda-had-a-V8!' moments."

Today, separated by more than 1,500 miles, Dueker and Mason are ringleaders of Americans for Dr. Rice, a tax-exempt, Federal Election Commission–registered 527 with the mission of "drafting Dr. Rice for President." Since the beginning of this year, the group has been setting up information booths at Republican events around the country, courting the political press, and, most recently, running Condi-for-president radio and TV spots in key states. Energizing their crusade, say group members, is their candidate's "universally" appealing blend of smarts, resumé, character, and demeanor. ("She's everything I would look for in a president," gushes Shari Demers, the New Hampshire chairperson of Americans for Dr. Rice.) But a Condi candidacy offers a broader, ulterior thrill as well: the prospect of thwarting Democrats' monopoly on the Is-America-ready-for-a-woman-president buzz currently being driven by Hillary Clinton.

While Dueker and Mason take pains to avoid the suggestion that Rice's gender is a significant part of her appeal, many fans have no qualms about touting the benefits of their heroine's race and sex. "Draft Condi" websites are awash in anti-Hillary—"Condi not the Blondie"—postings. The political press is positively drooling over the possibility of an all-girls' battle for the White House (a concept Clinton adviser–turned–antagonist Dick Morris is merrily hawking in his new book, *Condi vs. Hillary: The Next Great Presidential Race*). But, to true Condi lovers, the secretary of state's candidacy has the potential to meaningfully alter the political landscape. For too long, Republicans have been "pigeonholed" as a bunch of sexist, racist, mean-spirited old white guys, says Demers. "This is a chance for us to prove that we all feel the same way [as Democrats] when it comes to women."

FIRST, HOWEVER, DEMERS and Co. must prove they can shepherd the Condi craze into the realm of serious political action. "There are over 20 websites for Condi expressing their support," Dueker emphasizes. "[B]ut we are the only organized group authorized by the FEC to gather donations and promote our vision with radio ads and TV." Mason puts it more succinctly: "We're not the bobble head people," he assures me, referring to pro-Condi sites selling kitschy dolls in the secretary's image. "I don't think we've done anything that would embarrass Dr. Rice. We don't sell bobble heads and Condi thongs."

Even so, Americans for Dr. Rice isn't exactly a buttoned-down political operation. Headquartered in Mason's South Florida home, the group lacks big-money backers, seasoned political staff, and a candidate with either campaign experience or any apparent interest in running. (In an October 16 appearance on "Meet the Press," Rice, for the second time, swore to Tim Russert that she has no interest in being on the ticket in 2008.) What it does have is the passion-fueled, slightly wacky vibe of a campus movement—or possibly a Central American revolution. Americans for Dr. Rice enthusiasts call themselves "Condistas." Running across the top of AmericansforRice.com, the organization's website, is the exclamation ¡VIVA CONDI! And the group's adopted anthem, a pop tune titled "Condoleezza Will Lead Us" (by the obscure New York–based duo Tan Sleeve), has a cult-of-personality flavor that would have made Eva Perón envious: "Condoleezza will lead us, brothers, into a brave new world. . . ."

Americans for Dr. Rice has its sights on putting Rice's name on the ballot in enough states for her to emerge as a viable contender at the 2008 convention. Last month, it spent $4,000 to run a pro-Condi TV spot in New Hampshire during the series premiere of "Commander in Chief" (the new ABC drama starring Geena Davis as the first woman president—which some Republicans suspect is a Hollywood ploy to lay the groundwork for a Hillary run); this month, they placed "major ad buys" in Des Moines in the run-up to the Iowa GOP's fifth annual Ronald Reagan Dinner. Dueker has been crisscrossing the country on her own dollar establishing local "Condi Clubs," while Demers spent time this summer putting together a Condi float for a parade in her hometown of Chichester, New Hampshire. Meanwhile, her son, Barrett, an undergrad at The George Washington University, has been trying to get press credentials to serve as Americans for Dr. Rice's official correspondent at the State Department. "I can't wait to see him in the back asking questions," says his proud mom.

To give their mission a sense of political precedent (or at least feasibility), Team Condi compares itself to the Republicans who drafted Dwight Eisenhower for the 1952

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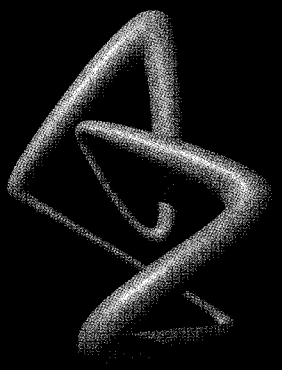

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election—though they admit they currently lack two key elements of that movement: money and prominent politicos championing their cause. But in time, they insist, all that will change. Already, Condistas point to the pledge of support for Condi from Steve Sviggum, the Republican speaker of the House in Minnesota, as well as the backing of Richard Valdes, a "Hispanic GOP leader and NJ District 33 Assemblyman nominee." As for money, Mason estimates that, so far, donations have been in the neighborhood of $20,000, largely through the sale of shirts, bumper stickers, and other "Condi gear" over the Web. "But, if this draft idea is really going to make it, we've got to raise serious bucks," he acknowledges.

To this end, Americans for Dr. Rice hosted a reception at the 2005 convention of the National Federation of Republican Assemblies in September. Unfortunately, selling a reputedly moderate, openly pro-choice Republican at a conference whose attendees perch proudly on the right wing of the GOP proved something of a challenge. By Dueker's estimate, the group took in a mere $400. No matter. Dueker and her compatriots remain undaunted. They succeeded in "attracting some of the people there to come look at our items and listen to our platform," she says. "And I don't think anybody made a derogatory comment or racial comment. I was really pleased in that respect."

BESIDES, EVEN IF the base disagrees with Rice on a couple of issues, she remains the Republicans' best hope for defeating Hillary Clinton, the Condistas insist. "This gives people a real alternative," says Frank DiSalle of New Rochelle, New York, whose condipundit.com informally coordinates with Americans for Dr. Rice. "Maybe someone says, 'Well, if I have to vote for a woman, I'd really prefer it wasn't a liberal woman with a feminist agenda' "—a sentiment DiSalle himself ardently shares. "Now," he says with satisfaction, "they'll have Condoleezza Rice to vote for."

With so much at stake, the Condistas see it as their civic duty to help Americans (including Rice herself) recognize the rightness of a Condi run by tirelessly touting their candidate's charms, fielding questions about her policy positions (an explanatory booklet is now available) and, of course, shooting down any suggestion that Republicans aren't ready to embrace a female nominee. Ironically, before the debut of "Commander in Chief," Americans for Dr. Rice took aim at the show in a Web posting, taking it to task for depicting the first female president as an Independent. "ABC couldn't imagine giving even ***fictional*** credit to the Republican Party for having the first female President. But that's OK, because we all know that Dr. Rice will be the first ***real*** female President after the election in 2008."

Until then, the important thing is to keep plugging away on the three-year plan and trust that the secretary will eventually embrace her destiny. Like the Tan Sleeve song says: "Condoleezza will lead us, sisters, so don't you worry 'bout a thing." ■

Monrovia Dispatch

Taylor Made

BY HANS NICHOLS

ELECTION DAY FINDS Sekou Conneh, the leader of the rebel group that drove dictator Charles Taylor into exile, refreshed from an afternoon nap, confident that Liberia's first election after 14 years of civil war would pass without incident. At his compound on the outskirts of town, the former leader of Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) is in high spirits, despite the fact that he has no chance of finishing among the top presidential vote-getters. "This is a great day for Liberia," says Conneh, as his posse of former rebels—some sporting aviator sunglasses despite standing in an unlit room—nod in unison. "This is a great day for democracy," continues the man whose army's march on Monrovia rivaled in brutality Taylor's own barbarous tactics during the civil war.

But, when the conversation turns to Taylor himself, Conneh's ode to Liberian democracy ends as abruptly as many of Liberia's roads. "There are some people who have worked with Taylor since 14 years [ago] and they are not going to change," he says. "They are his friends, and he gave them jobs. He built them up. And most of them are not going to change, so, yeah, Taylor is fully represented in this country. I know that. I fear that."

Taylor was the proverbial elephant in the room leading up to Liberia's October 11 presidential and congressional elections: Although barred from interfering in Liberian politics under the conditions of his asylum, there is plenty of evidence that Taylor has continued to meddle from his luxurious exile in Calabar, Nigeria. Leading presidential candidates were mostly mum about Taylor during the recent campaign, lest they alienate the roughly one-third of the population still thought to support the former dictator. Now that nearly all the votes have been counted, Taylor's allies seem to have done surprisingly well in the House and Senate. (The presidency will be decided in a run-off election on November 8.) These Taylor loyalists may soon have the opportunity to determine the fate of their former benefactor. And that means that the biggest winner of Liberia's latest stab at democracy may be the man who did the most to destroy the last one.

RAVAGED BY WAR and looted by its leaders, Liberia is a country with no public electricity or water, where squatters occupy government ministries and children play in heaps of trash left uncollected on the street. The political challenges facing its government are formidable, too, especially given the fact that

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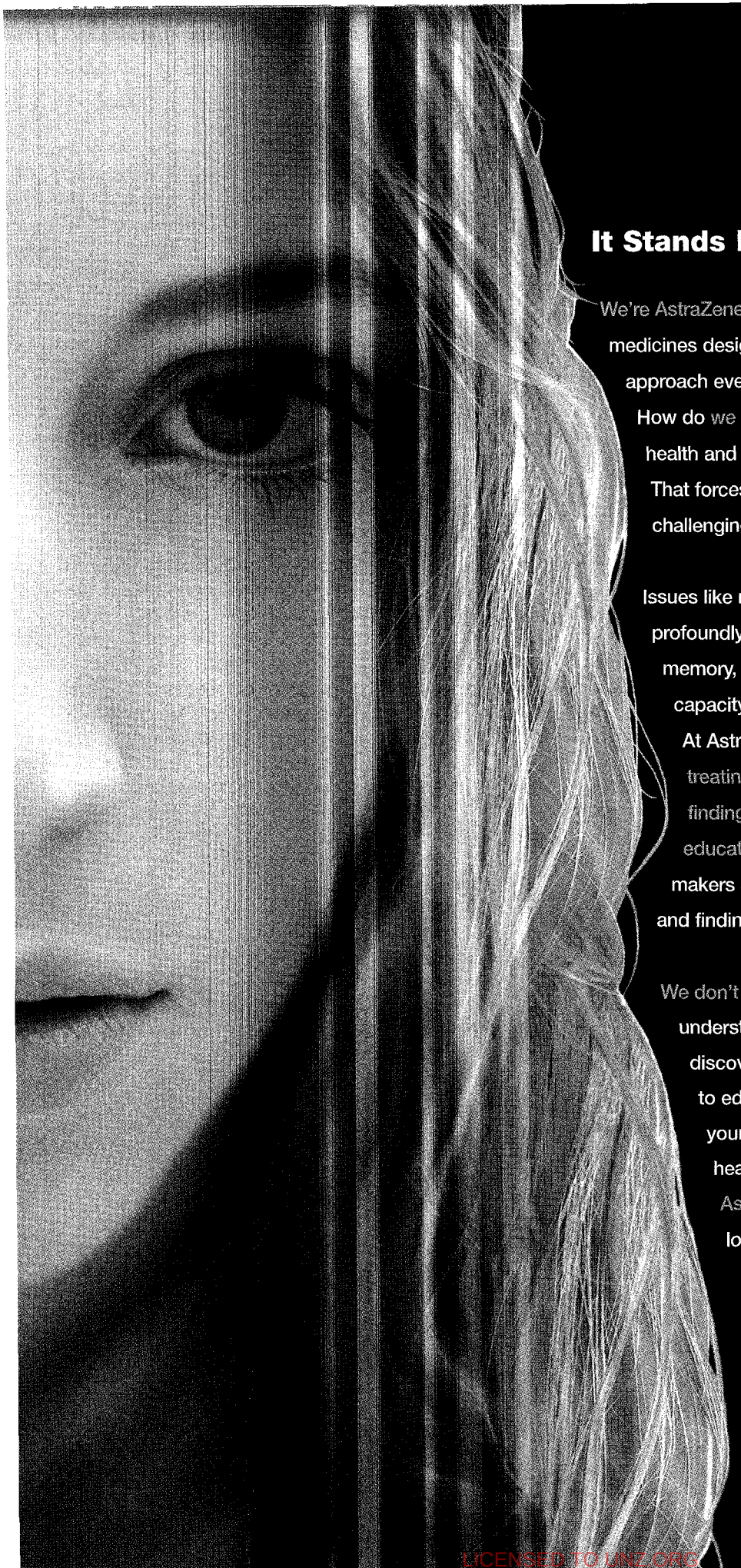

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few of those winning legislative seats in the election come to power with clean hands. For example, in the soft hills of Nimba County, where Taylor began Liberia's civil war on Christmas Eve 1989, Adolphus Dolo (alias: "General Peanut Butter") and Prince Johnson have won Senate seats. A notorious Taylor henchman, Dolo gained a reputation as the only pro-government commander to fend off the feared attacks of Conneh's LURD army. Johnson began the war a Taylor ally but fell out on the road to Monrovia and is now a bitter enemy. He achieved notoriety by ordering his men to bring him the severed ears of then-President Samuel Doe. (They videotaped Doe pleading in vain for his life.)

Taylor's exile will be one of the first items facing this new government when it assembles in January under the mindful gaze of the 15,000 U.N. troops who constitute the second-largest peacekeeping mission in the world. Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo is under international pressure to turn Taylor over to the U.N.-backed tribunal in Sierra Leone, where he is charged with 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. But Obasanjo has said he will only do so if the democratically elected government of Liberia consents. "Obasanjo will pass the buck to the new president of Liberia. The president will pass the buck to the House and Senate, and either the legislature will decide or it will pass the buck to the people, in a referendum," says Jasper Cummeh, the head of a campaign finance monitoring organization in Monrovia. "The first thing for Taylor is not to manipulate the presidency, but to try to manipulate the House, and he will also have some voice in the Senate."

No one doubts that Taylor violated the terms of his exile by meddling in the Liberian elections, but no one knows, precisely, to what extent. Absent a reliable campaign finance reporting system, tracing Taylor's campaign contributions is nearly impossible. Of the 762 campaigns, only 116 had filed reports two weeks after the deadline. Former President Jimmy Carter, one of 400 international monitors, tells me, "Charles Taylor has lots of people running for office. There's no doubt about that. He'd like to control the government."

As the ballots made their way to election headquarters in Monrovia last week, some by helicopter and others along Liberia's medieval roads, it became clear that Taylor allies had had a good day. While the National Patriotic Party (NPP), Taylor's old political machine, has not managed an overwhelming success, several close friends of the former dictator have assumed new, if temporary, party identities. They seem to have the best of both worlds: the quiet support of the old NPP guard and a clean bill of health from their new parties of choice. Enough erstwhile NPP loyalists have publicly embraced new parties to suggest a fifth-column strategy. Even the NPP secretary-general ran as an independent. At least Taylor's wife, who did not accompany him into exile, ran on the official NPP ticket. She won a resounding victory.

According to several Liberian political analysts, no fewer than eight of Taylor's close associates, including his wife, will serve in the 30-seat Senate—more than enough to play defense on war-crimes legislation and perhaps enough to grease the path for his return. With a potential plurality in the Senate, Taylor also appears to be making a play for outright control of the House, where his former son-in-law, Edwin Snowe, is up for the speakership.

A 35-year-old former truck driver, Snowe married and then divorced Taylor's daughter. Shortly before he left for Nigeria in 2003, Taylor promoted Snowe to managing director of the Liberia Petroleum Refining Company. Snowe became one of the richest men in Liberia during the two-year transitional government that has been defined by excessive corruption, even by West African standards. Local journalists following his congressional campaign, which ended in a clear victory, said Snowe spent more than most presidential aspirants. "He is going to buy the speakership," says Tom Kmara, editor of the respected *New Democrat* newspaper.

Upstairs in his beachside compound outside Monrovia, behind tinted windows that soften the afternoon sun, Snowe dismisses any suggestion that he is his former father-in-law's stooge. Earlier this year, in fact, Taylor tried to have him killed, Snowe claims. "But the investigation came out that it was not true and that I fabricated that," says Snowe. Of course, he has a ready explanation for this, too: "I was investigated by Mr. Taylor's ex-brother-in-law," he chuckles. "So his ex-son-in-law was investigated by his ex-brother-in-law."

On the day after the election, Snowe is confident. His decision to leave Taylor's old party, where he was once the youth chairman, and run as an independent appears to have been the right one. It will give him the flexibility to broker a deal with many of the nearly 20 parties and independent representatives in the House, he says, vaulting him to the speaker's chair. But Snowe's supposed independence appears as thin as his allegations of the Taylor-sponsored assassination attempt. One week before polling day, Snowe reportedly announced that, despite his independent candidacy, he had rejoined the NPP, a move designed to drive up his margin of victory. (Snowe later denied that this was the case, although the original NPP candidate dutifully stepped aside.) "It's all part of Taylor's game, part of the diversion," says James G. Kaizolu, editor of the *Liberian Express* newspaper and a former president of the press association. "They are all still NPP."

So what are Snowe's intentions regarding Taylor and the Special Court for Sierra Leone? "I am not going to lie about it. I am not going to kid you. I don't wish evil on Mr. Taylor," he says. "If the law dictates that, so be it. But I am not going to go after Mr. Taylor to hunt him down. No."

That's a remarkably charitable attitude toward a man whom you believe tried to have you killed. But then again, Taylor has tried to kill many Liberians. And, given the legislative results, one gets the sense that Taylor slept easier than most Liberian politicians on Election Day. ■

Hans Nichols is a Fulbright scholar in West Africa.

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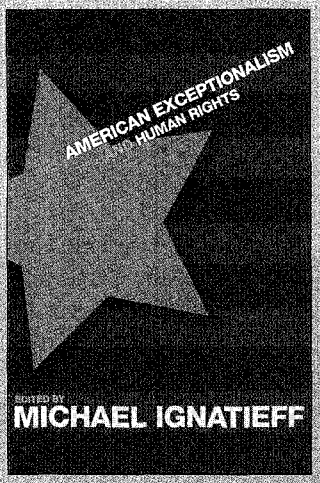

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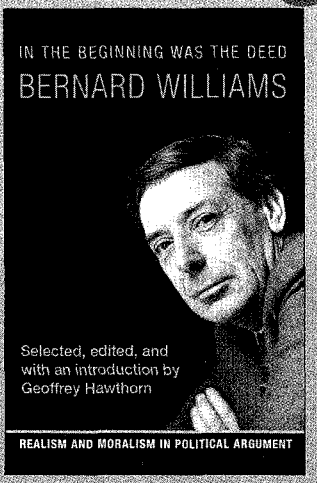
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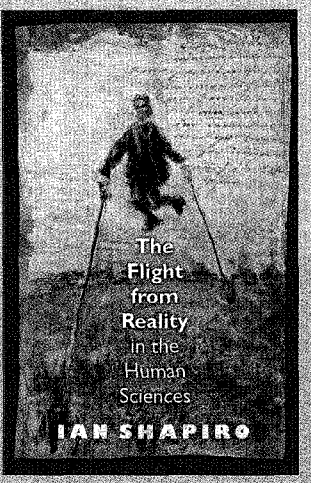

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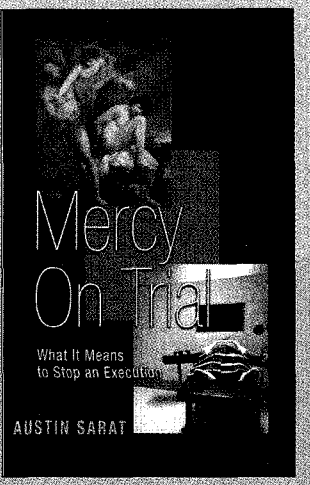

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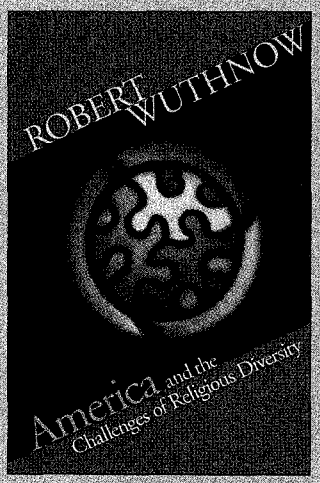

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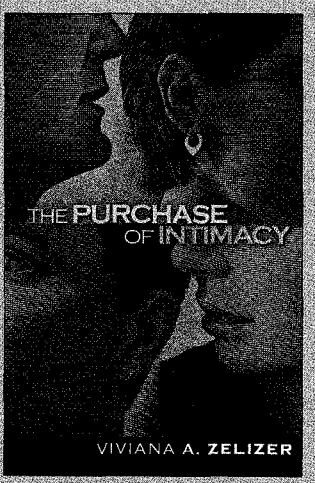

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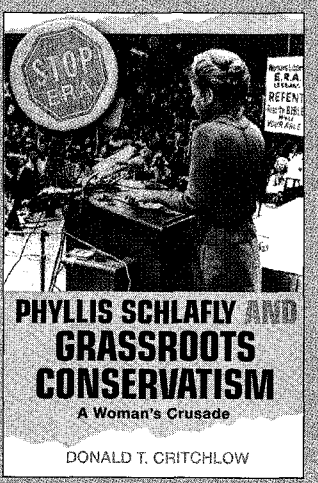

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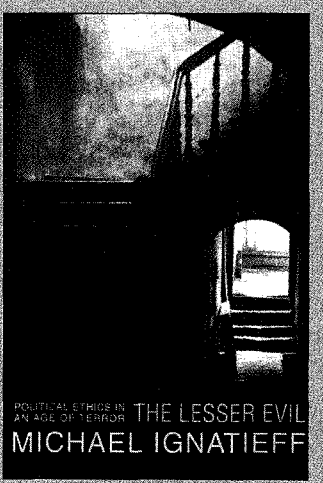

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Arnold realizes he's too famous.

Boxed Office

BY JOE MATHEWS

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

THE GOVERNOR OF California is refusing to stand at center stage. As the head of the Fresno County Farm Bureau talks to the cameras, Arnold Schwarzenegger drifts off to the left of the podium, leaving cameramen from local news stations with a choice: Get a dull shot of Schwarzenegger as he stands and listens, or shoot the tableau of farmers, two John Deere tractors, and a green-and-yellow sign that reads AG LEADERS FOR REFORM YES 74 75 76 77. One cameraman turns his lens slightly away from Schwarzenegger and toward the sign.

That counts as a small victory for Schwarzenegger in California's latest campaign season. Schwarzenegger has called a special election for November 8. Californians will vote on eight ballot initiatives, four of which—Propositions 74, 75, 76, and 77—are the focus of the campaign that has brought the governor to the Central Valley.

The election coincides with the bottoming-out of Schwarzenegger's once-lofty approval ratings, from nearly 70 percent late last year in public polls to less than 40 percent as of early October. All manner of explanations have been offered for that decline: The governor has moved too far to the right; he has neglected his conservative base. He has raised too much money (in the eyes of his critics) and not enough to counter his opponents, who have outspent him better than two to one (in the eyes of his supporters). He spends too much time campaigning for his ballot initiatives; he spends too much time in Sacramento and has not done enough to explain his ballot initiatives. But the debate over how he squandered his popularity aside, the consensus is that, as *The Sacramento Bee* put it, "The governor's star has dimmed."

Except that it hasn't. Schwarzenegger's recent attempts to deflect attention from himself prove that his star is still bright—perhaps too bright for his immediate political needs. Driving Schwarzenegger's more subdued stage presence is the realization that his huge persona is obscuring his ideas. These ideas—mostly centrist measures that include an extension of the time teachers must work for tenure, a limit on state spending, and a redistricting designed to elect more moderates to office—are more popular than he is.

Joe Mathews is a LOS ANGELES TIMES *reporter. His book* THE PEOPLE'S MACHINE: GOV. SCHWARZENEGGER AND THE RISE OF BLOCKBUSTER DEMOCRACY *is due out next summer.*

Whether Schwarzenegger's ballot measures succeed or fail in the November 8 election may depend on the outcome of a peculiar contest between Schwarzenegger and his own stardom. In this, the governor is battling not just his lifelong habit of seeking the limelight but also a world of people who want to put him center stage, from TV cameramen to his worst political enemies.

FROM THE BEGINNING, Schwarzenegger designed his political persona as an extension of the characters he played in the movies. As "the action governor," he drove farm trucks, various hydrogen-powered vehicles, and a Hummer that was rechristened Reform 1. At various events, supporters waved signs with his simple, all-purpose, populist slogan, JOIN ARNOLD.

Schwarzenegger's persona gave him an enormous advantage in using California's system of ballot initiatives and referenda to advance his agenda. Schwarzenegger used ballot initiative campaigns to force the legislature to change workers' compensation laws, to pressure Indian tribes to renegotiate gaming compacts, to support his business base (by backing an initiative to curb lawsuits against companies), and even to score bipartisan points (by endorsing a $3 billion bond for stem-cell research). In his first year in office, Schwarzenegger participated in campaigns for and against 17 different ballot measures.

Schwarzenegger discovered that a campaign for a ballot measure is in many ways like one to promote a movie. Each involves a six-week barrage of TV advertisements, tracking polls, and press interviews. As a politician campaigning for ballot measures, the governor was able to use many of the same tricks he learned selling films. On the stump, he even took to wearing the same logo-emblazoned "message jackets" that had been a staple of his movie promotions since *Terminator 2*.

Schwarzenegger's stardom does not give him greater political credibility with voters, pollsters from both parties say. But voters will pay more attention to him than to his opponents because of who he is. If Schwarzenegger has a political message that resonates with voters, he can move poll numbers with startling speed. In a campaign for a bond to refinance the state's debt on the March 2004 ballot, Schwarzenegger boosted poll numbers 25 points in less than a month. Last fall, in his campaign against Proposition 66, which would have amended the state's popular "three strikes law" for convicted felons, Schwarzenegger drove down support for the initiative by nearly 20 points in ten days. Independent pollsters say such a fast drop is unprecedented in the history of California politics.

The difference this year is that the governor's opponents—most notably, political strategists for the state's public employee unions—have figured out how to use the phenomenon of Schwarzenegger's stardom against him. Angry that the governor delayed the implementation of new nurse-to-patient ratios in some hospital units, the California Nurses Association (CNA) made a practice of

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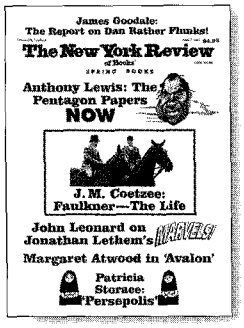
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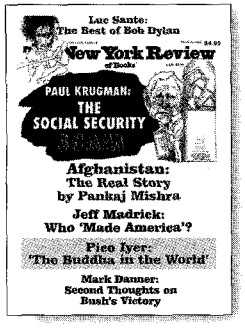

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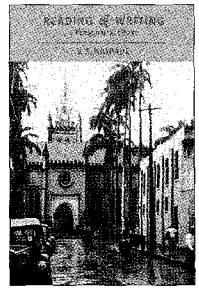

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protesting all of his public appearances and some of his private fund-raisers. This strategy created TV pictures juxtaposing nurses with the governor. As a result, the union received far more press coverage than it would have with any other strategy.

"We took his strength—the ability to get attention—and turned it into weakness," says Rose Ann DeMoro, the CNA executive director. "It was jujitsu." DeMoro jokes that the CNA building in downtown Oakland is so covered with anti-Schwarzenegger signs that "we're no longer the CNA headquarters. We're the STOP ARNOLD building."

This fall, an alliance of unions is using the same tactic in ads opposing the governor's measures. These ads say very little about the ballot initiatives; their stated target is a governor who has one "bad idea" after another and wants to "weaken the voice" of public employees. The irony is that the governor's stardom has provided a megaphone for the unions. As a result of their campaign, at least three of the governor's four initiatives trail in the polls. But the same surveys suggest that the concepts behind each measure are broadly popular. A poll by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), a private foundation, conducted from September 12–19 found that, while 49 percent of likely voters support strict limits on state spending, only 26 percent support Proposition 76, Schwarzenegger's proposal to limit state spending. Likewise, while 66 percent of likely voters endorsed Schwarzenegger's belief that legislators should be stripped of the power to draw their own districts, his measure to do just that—Proposition 77—has the support of only 33 percent of the voters in the same poll.

SCHWARZENEGGER HAS SPENT an entire lifetime expanding his persona to as many corners of American life as possible—cigar smokers, Hummer drivers, fitness buffs, movie fans, immigrants, and even nudists (the Terminator always arrived from the future unclothed) claim him as their own. Now he struggles visibly to dial back his persona. He has cut out the "hasta la vista, baby," but there are times when he can't help himself. He talks about this year's troubles as the "second act" of a movie in which the hero is briefly struggling. In trying to explain the sheer force of the more than $80 million the unions have spent attacking him, Schwarzenegger told a radio interviewer, "We're talking about three, four times the amount of money that they would use in the movie business to promote a movie."

At the Fresno farmer rally, Schwarzenegger wins the day's fight to play down his persona. In earlier days, he might have driven a tractor into the event. Here, he limits his "action" to grabbing a handful of freshly picked grapes and popping them in his mouth. He wears a simple blue sport coat—not a message jacket.

While Schwarzenegger is the star of the ads against his measures, the governor appears in only two of the first six TV ads his team has made *for* his initiatives. Supporters of the redistricting measure are actively distancing themselves from the governor. "Proposition 77 is not Arnold Schwarzenegger," says Bill Mundell, who is chairing one organization supporting it. Last month, when Schwarzenegger decided to declare that he would run for reelection in 2006, he made the announcement not on "The Tonight Show" but in a small theater in downtown San Diego. Schwarzenegger made the assembled press—including two dozen TV cameras—wait through a 45-minute town hall meeting on the ballot initiatives before dropping the news into his closing statement.

Now that the governor has never looked weaker, the full political power of his stardom is most apparent. Even though a majority of state voters say they would have preferred that Schwarzenegger not call the special election, nearly seven in ten say they are paying close attention to election-related news, according to the PPIC poll. That election ballot is thoroughly dominated by the governor. In addition to the four initiatives for which he is campaigning, there are four other measures, two of which he nominally supports. The other two initiatives—one on drug prices, the other on energy regulation—were placed on the ballot by the alliance of public employee unions specifically to create political problems for Schwarzenegger.

This is the perverse silver lining for the governor: He may be trapped in his stardom, but so are his opponents. The public employees' unions can get attention for attacking him—but not for the rest of their agenda. Democrats, worried that a prolonged budget fight would help the governor pass his measures, acquiesced to most of his budget demands. They got widespread press coverage mainly for bills that proposed new regulations on two industries with which Schwarzenegger has personal ties: video games and dietary supplements. (The governor signed both in the end.) To be heard politically in California, one must talk about Schwarzenegger.

Schwarzenegger's two declared Democratic opponents in the 2006 race, State Treasurer Phil Angelides and State Controller Steve Westly, have had little success creating political identities separate from the incumbent. (Angelides, who is running as the "anti-Arnold," rents hotel rooms near Schwarzenegger campaign events in an effort to capture his TV cameras.) Schwarzenegger's stardom remains so great that even other stars depend on him to get political attention. The director Rob Reiner, who has talked about running for governor, has grabbed headlines by campaigning against one of the initiatives endorsed by Schwarzenegger. Actor Warren Beatty, who is also flirting with the race, has been giving speeches attacking Schwarzenegger, who talks publicly about Beatty as if the actor were a hopeless star-stalker: "He throws my name in because it becomes newsworthy and it becomes big and gets coverage."

Even when Schwarzenegger is stepping out of the frame, the governor grasps the political truth: However the special election turns out, California will remain an Arnold vehicle. ■

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Republicans prepare for life after Bush.

Beached Party

BY RYAN LIZZA

THAT WAS FAST. Last month, George W. Bush was the leader of the conservative movement. This month, he's a traitor. "I don't think that Bush was ever one of us," says Bruce Bartlett, the conservative columnist and former Reagan and Bush 41 official. "And conservatives knew that. He was the anointed one. You can tell if someone is really part of your movement or not or whether he's someone from the outside. He's never said or written anything that would lead one to believe he has any clue what movement conservatism is all about. You were stuck with what you had, and I think conservatives made the best of it."

Bartlett, who is writing a book about Bush's betrayal of conservatives, was a critic before it became cool. Now, of course, his bandwagon is getting very crowded. "Bush was not the second coming of Ronald Reagan," says former Bush speechwriter David Frum, whose memoir about serving the president is called *The Right Man* but who is now one of the rebel leaders of the anti–Harriet Miers campaign. "He was a new thing. Every conservative knew he was a blend and was going to reach out to new constituencies. What the old coalition was going to get was a tax cut and judges. ... But the tax cut has turned out not to be a very valuable thing. Because of the deficits, this tax cut is not going to be permanent. Now here [with Miers] is the other most important thing he was going to do for conservatives, and he didn't do it."

To be sure, the conservative abandonment of Bush isn't total. The right is divided. Some see the split as one of Washington eggheads versus the red-state masses. Others, noting that the debate over Miers is, at its core, about abortion, interpret the current anger as a revolt by social conservatives. But neither of these explanations quite captures what is going on. The conservative war over Miers is being fought by elites on both sides. The pro-Miers elites are just doing a better job of wrapping their cause in populism. Meanwhile, members of the Republican clerical establishment can be found both criticizing the Miers pick (Gary Bauer) and defending it (Pat Robertson).

The best explanation of the two warring tribes comes from Marshall Wittmann. Having bounced from the Christian Coalition to John McCain's staff to the Democratic Leadership Council in the last decade, he has earned a reputation as Washington's shrewdest conservatologist. The Moose, as he likes to be called, is giddy about the conservative crack-up, and he thinks he has identified the fault line: "This is intra-conservative warfare between the faith-based conservatives and the reality-based conservatives." And, by "faith," he means not faith in God, but faith in Bush. In other words, the real split over Miers is between conservatives who worship Bush and those who worship conservatism. One camp believes in the infallibility of the president. The other camp believes the evidence before them. Fred Barnes and James Dobson are faith-based conservatives. Bill Kristol and Gary Bauer are reality-based conservatives. Hugh Hewitt is faith-based. Ramesh Ponnuru is reality-based.

Bush has more than three years left in office, and he will certainly make decisions that the right will cheer. But the scars from the Miers pick are unlikely to heal fully. A bond has been broken. Psychologically, conservatives are now looking beyond this president. Writing Monday in *The New York Times*, the *National Review*'s Ponnuru all but declared the Bush era over: Conservatives are "thinking more and more about life after President Bush." And, as THE NEW REPUBLIC goes to press, the conventional wisdom in Washington is that the Valerie Plame leak scandal is about to engulf the White House. "If there are indictments," says a GOP lobbyist, "and the basis of those indictments is that they didn't tell the truth about the war, people will want to change the channel, and they will be looking for new leadership. The next three years will be dismissed." Adds Wittmann, "If [U.S. Attorney Patrick] Fitzgerald comes down with something that strikes the White House, all bets are off with conservatism. It's the post-Bush era." The question for conservatives is what comes next.

AS CONSERVATIVES TELL it, the current insurrection has been building for some time. Bartlett, the mainstream conservative who has written and thought the most about Bush's disloyalty, tells the tale this way. In 2001, conservatives were deeply frustrated by low-level Bush heresies like the education bill. Then, September 11 silenced all dissent. In 2002, things got worse: An enormous agriculture bill, steel tariffs, a bloated budget, and a campaign finance bill that Bush once argued was unconstitutional. (Bartlett goes so far as to say Bush "violated his oath of office" by signing it.) Then, the Iraq war silenced all dissent. Next came the Medicare prescription-drug bill, which simultaneously funneled money to the pharmaceutical industry, expanded government more than any entitlement since LBJ, *and* violated the traditions, if not rules, of the House when the vote on the bill was held open for nearly three hours while conservative Republicans were bullied into reversing their no votes. "From my own point of view, the drug bill was the line in

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the sand," says Bartlett. "That's the point I decided to write a book and say this guy isn't one of us." Other conservatives were also very angry. Then, the presidential campaign against John Kerry silenced all dissent.

We know the rest of the story: Absent a new war or domestic enemy like Kerry, Bush was suddenly exposed to the whole world, including the conservative movement, as a less-than-great president. Social Security reform fizzled. Bush signed an outrageously pork-laden transportation bill. He vacationed while New Orleans drowned. "What a lot of conservatives have always believed is that at least we know how to make the trains run," says a chastened Bartlett. "It was jarring that the MBA president wasn't a good manager." And then it was even more jarring that he wasn't such a good picker of Supreme Court justices, either. "Judges in the mold of Scalia and Thomas were the 'no new taxes' pledge of this presidency," says Frum. Scales fell from eyes, and the rebellion began.

Conservatives are now looking ahead. Frum is writing a book about the future of the movement. Republicans are jittery that Bush will be a liability for them in 2006. And the 2008 presidential candidates are suddenly beginning to carve out identities that distinguish them from Bush. Since the president has no clear successor, the Republican primaries will be more open and dynamic than they have been in decades. "Eight or ten months ago, it looked like the 2008 nominee would be the person who could convince primary voters he was most like George W. Bush," says California Republican strategist Dan Schnur. "That's not the case anymore." Numerous interviews with Republicans across the ideological spectrum reveal three camps jockeying to define the post-Bush era.

Reformers

There are two strains of reform conservatism bubbling in GOP circles. They look nothing like each other, but either one might find fertile ground if the Republican status quo is truly upended.

The brand of reform that is most clearly ascendant is John McCain's. "Chaos is our friend" is a saying often used by McCain advisers, and they are right. Although the Arizona senator can't explicitly take advantage of the unrest over Miers, given that he supports her nomination, he benefits from GOP anger at the president. Conservative disillusionment with Bush is giving McCain a second chance with parts of the base that previously shunned him—a chance he's well-positioned to exploit. Even before the Miers split, he alone in the GOP carried the mantle of fiscal restraint. He voted against Bush's Medicare and highway bills and has now joined hands with conservatives in the House to try to cut spending. Meanwhile, McCain's allies have been quietly reaching out to social conservatives. They hold regular conference calls with Republican leaders in South Carolina, the senator's Waterloo in 2000. McCain (shamefully) has even endorsed the teaching of "intelligent design" in schools.

Not only is McCain taking advantage of the ideological fissures on the right, but he is one of the few Republicans who could actually benefit from the scandals threatening to bring down his party. The McCainiacs have been the loudest voices in GOP politics decrying the Jack Abramoff–style corruption that has infested Washington. (McCain himself, to the chagrin of many conservatives, is leading the Senate investigation of Abramoff.) If the Bush collapse is accompanied by major Republican defeats in 2006. "How sobering will that be to the party?" says a McCain adviser. (McCain is poised to be the chief beneficiary on the right.)

The other interesting reform advice Republicans are getting these days comes from, of all people, Newt Gingrich. The former House speaker has spent his years in exile thinking deeply about the future of conservatism. He has a website, newt.org. He lectures widely. He sends Republicans long white papers about how to repair the party. In the middle of the White House meltdown, he popped up on television to offer his views. And, yes, he's thinking about running for president.

Gingrich has been puzzling over conservatism's central dilemma: How does it transform its guiding ethos from that of an opposition movement, which it once was, to that of a governing majority, which it now is? "We are confronting a decision," he wrote recently, "which will largely decide whether conservatism is a temporarily successful movement doomed to retreat into minority status again or is a governing movement that is capable of solving problems and governing on behalf of the American people for a generation or more."

Gingrich happens to be pro-Miers, but the party's recent misfortunes have many conservatives listening to his advice, which, read closely, is actually a searing critique of Bush's leadership. His main idea is that conservatives need to figure out the proper "governing style and governing tone." The most successful leaders, he argues, "have always emphasized the nation and sought to include their opponents." He believes the country wants the GOP to "campaign less and govern more." Gingrich has become, in effect, a champion of the goo-goo idea that politics has become too polarized and too partisan. (Yes, this is the same Newt Gingrich.) "While [long-term governing majorities] always stay close to their base," he wrote, "they do not allow their base to limit either their appeal or their reach. While they are always solid partisans, they offer visions and principles that reach far beyond their partisan supporters." Successful leaders also have an "inclusive approach and a problem solving tone" and will not "divide the country unnecessarily." They also "evolve and change" when circumstances do; "rethink and change ... policies" and "personnel"; eschew appeals for support based strictly on "loyalty"; and are "determined but not stubborn." In other words, to be successful, the next Republican leader must govern in a manner exactly the opposite from Bush.

But, while some Republicans may like the critique of Bush's style, the policy implications of Gingrich's advice

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would seem to be the reverse of what the right wants. Gingrich calls for leadership that is depolarizing and apolitical. Like McCain, he's calling for the party to emphasize the national interest over the narrow interests of its most ardent supporters. The problem is that many conservatives are now hungry for purity. Bush has ironically pushed away both sides in this debate: He has governed as a partisan, alienating more than half the electorate; yet, in the end, he failed to satisfy his own base.

Theocrats

Social conservatives in the reality-based wing of the party are now coming to terms with the fact that their investment in Bush hasn't paid off. They believe, erroneously, that they won the 2004 election for him, and they are hungry for a new leader. Opportunities abound for ambitious Republicans to fill this vacuum. So far, Senators Sam Brownback and Rick Santorum have edged closest to coming out against Miers, but neither has pulled the trigger. "This is probably the first seminal moment leading into 2008 where the candidates have the opportunity to go against the president and define their beliefs independently of the Bush movement," says Juleanna Glover Weiss, a former White House spokeswoman who worked for John Ashcroft when he used the Clinton impeachment to establish himself as the darling of social conservatives in the run-up to the 2000 campaign.

That strategy obviously didn't serve Ashcroft's presidential ambitions so well, but, after Bush, the temptation to run as a pure Christian right candidate will be high. True, Republicans usually elect establishment candidates. "The Republican Party is very hierarchical," says Republican pollster Bill McInturff. In most presidential campaigns, "there has clearly been a next person in line." But there is no next person this year. And the weaker Bush is as 2008 approaches, the less he will be able to anoint an heir.

The demographics of the GOP also make a hard-right run tempting. Recently, pollster Tony Fabrizio has been asking Republican voters whether their most important goal "is to promote individual freedom by reducing the size and scope of government and its intrusion into the lives of its citizens" or "to promote traditional values by protecting traditional marriage and the life of the unborn." In his most recent survey, 34 percent of Republicans take the freedom position and 49 percent take the values position. "Every time I've stratified out the Republican Party, we've come up with roughly 45 to 50 percent of the party that falls into the category of being theocrats," he says. That's right, half of Republicans are Republicans not because they want to reduce the size of government but because of gay marriage and abortion. (And Fabrizio reports that the 49 percent is far more homogenous in its views than the 34 percent.) Becoming the king of that 49 percent in a time of conservative frustration with Bush and no dominant establishment candidate could pay dividends. The key is distinguishing oneself. "Prayer in school, abortion, gay marriage. What's the next thing? All those are old hat," says Fabrizio, who, it should be said, takes a dim view of this strategy. "What's it going to be, speaking in tongues?"

Made Men

As for the less exotic candidates in the current GOP field, the lesson they may take away from the Bush revolt is that they need to reject some of Bushism but not Bush.

The response from the milquetoast, establishment Republicans likely to run for president—such as George Allen, Bill Frist, and Mitt Romney—will be that they simply need to hew a little closer to the conservative movement's definition of the creed. In 2000, conservatives were hungry and ready for compromise. Bush took advantage of this weakness in the movement and offered up "compassionate conservatism," an implicitly critical version of the right's philosophy. His establishment successors are unlikely to do the same. For one, the Allens and Romneys of the party are more tied to the movement. They speak like true believers in a way Bush never does. Unlike the McCains to their left and the Brownbacks to their right, they have an interest in calming the tensions within the party. They are all too cautious to risk offending Bush or his team, but they will certainly run to the right of where he is today. "If you sound like Michael Moore, bashing the president, you're not likely to get a whole lot of votes in a Republican primary," says Republican pollster Whit Ayres. "On the other hand, if you say, 'I think he's been a fine president, but I think I would have done a few things differently on issue a, b, and c,' you're fine." The obvious issues ripe for critique are spending, the size of government, and immigration.

Despite the criminal investigations, the anti-Miers rebellion, and the gaggle of Republicans distancing themselves from Bush, in the end this kind of tepid philosophical readjustment may be all that happens on the right, a minor return to more Reagan-era themes. If so, the current rebellion will end not with a bang but a whimper. "Conservatism is stirring from its nap," says Wittmann. "But it's not clear it has woken up. It may just go back to sleep." In fact, the rebels are already being smacked back into line and learning how powerful, even at its nadir, the Bush machine still is. GOP senators who have expressed doubts about Miers are being greeted in Iowa and New Hampshire by Bush operatives pressuring them to vote for her. When I ask Frum how he is doing, he replies, "I'm watching the immolation of my career in Washington. You do a thing like this, and there are consequences." He declined to elaborate.

And remember Bruce Bartlett, the longtime conservative intellectual turned withering Bush critic? The head of his Dallas think tank, the conservative National Center for Policy Analysis, called him Monday to say that the organization's Republican donors were less than pleased with his criticism of the president. Bartlett was fired. Maybe the Bush era isn't over quite yet. ■

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Histories

GEORGE CLOONEY IS attractively restless. Through a television series, he became a film star, resplendent in personality and talent. That would be enough of a career for most resplendent actors, but not for Clooney. He continued acting (*One Fine Day* and *Three Kings* were particularly good), but he wanted to be more than a star (in his own way, something like Robert Redford). Clooney began to direct—*Confessions of a Dangerous Mind*, in which he also appeared. Television kept its grip, not only because of his early acting success there, but because he comes, one may say, from a television family—his father was a newscaster. Clooney produced a live broadcast of *Fail Safe* in 2000, and he has just announced a similar project remaking the Sidney Lumet film *Network*.

GOOD NIGHT, AND GOOD LUCK
(Warner Independent)

THE SQUID AND THE WHALE
(Samuel Goldwyn)

Clooney's background helps to explain **GOOD NIGHT, AND GOOD LUCK**, which he co-wrote (with Grant Heslov), directed, and appears in, and that marries the two media—a film about television. This is the story of Edward R. Murrow's confrontation with Senator Joseph McCarthy in 1954, and a note of identification is nowadays needed. Murrow was a prominent reporter on CBS who made his reputation with his broadcasts from London during World War II. His chromium-steel precision, his no-nonsense address, brought him respect as well as a kind of stardom. McCarthy was an unscrupulous conniver who capitalized personally on the postwar fear of communism by smearing well-regarded people with accusations of red sympathies that were, to put it gently, not always true. Still, McCarthy became a hero to the far right and to the permanent rabble that always longs for rousing. Murrow was the first big figure in television to take a stand with a broadcast against McCarthy's methods.

We can easily infer that Murrow was a hero to Clooney's father. The son had not yet been born when McCarthy was raging, but as young George arrived and grew up, the son of a man in Murrow's profession, the Murrow heroism was apparently burned into him. This seems to have been the chief reason why he wanted to make this film half a century after the event.

Some modern resonance for the story can be found in the Rush Limbaughs of our day and in the difference between the White House's Iraq war and the one in the news reports, but we are not again a country in which a vastly exaggerated domestic threat is inflated for personal advantage. It seems as if Clooney just had this idea for a film he wanted to make and hoped it would resound in the present day. It doesn't, quite.

The making of it is smart. Clooney opted for black-and-white cinematography so that the television clips of McCarthy could slip into the texture, and Robert Elswit's lighting makes the CBS offices and newsrooms seem more dramatically lighted than the CBS broadcasts. The effect is of a film noir with a *blanc* subject. Through much of the picture Clooney glides and leaps from face to face with a handheld camera in order to heighten the moderate drama of what is taking place. As relief from the political talk, Clooney puts a black singer—the excellent Dianne Reeves—in a studio with an orchestra so that he can cut to her songs once in a while and give us a rest from the journalistic scurrying. (And he demarcates the era of the film with cigarettes. Murrow himself is a top smoker, even on the air.)

As Murrow, David Strathairn seems encased. He makes us feel that he has found a life-size image of Murrow and has stepped inside to give it life and voice. (The title of the film was Murrow's usual sign-off line.) Clooney plays Fred Friendly, Murrow's producer, decks himself in ill-fitting suits, and, without any overt maneuvers, manages in the middle of the stress and strain to charm us. Frank Langella is more than credible as William Paley, the head of CBS, who is something of a hero himself in this story. Even if grudgingly, Paley allowed Murrow to proceed with a broadcast that might cost the network some advertising. (Under Morrow's courageous intent runs the thrum of A. J. Liebling's famous comment: the only way to have a free press is to own one. Murrow would have been helpless without Paley.)

Yet the McCarthy/Murrow conflict in the picture is not pressing enough—these days, anyway—to justify the considerable skill expended on it. Murrow's confrontation wasn't even the key moment in McCarthy's downfall. That came later in a Senate inquiry. Clooney returns to his real subject at the end. The picture opens with Murrow's speech at a banquet in 1958. The speech is then interrupted by the whole film. At the end Murrow finishes his speech in which he warns of the creeping puerilism of television. Is this because of a shortage of Murrows or of Paleys?

THE SQUID AND THE WHALE is not only one of the most ungainly film titles on record, the reason for its use isn't quite made clear. After the picture's mildly discomfiting start title-wise, it proceeds to a close call with success. Noah Baumbach wrote and directed the film (his third credited feature), and it is widely bruited that the materials are autobiographical. The time of this possibly personal history is the mid-1980s, the setting is Park Slope in Brooklyn, the story is about the collapsing marriage of two writers with two sons who are approximately sixteen and thirteen. Baumbach (born in 1969) has parents who are writers and might have been the older son.

Any synopsis of the film would make it sound like one more episode of

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a soap opera. We get the routine divorce story—the effect on the two boys, glimpses of the lives (including the sex lives) of the separated parents, troubles about custody arrangements, the older boy's early love life, the younger one's ambitions for such a life. Baumbach—and this is the most winning part of the picture—presumably realized that, as data, his story was pretty much cliché. The only way to give it life was to give it lives—those of the four principals. All four of the roles are written with pungency. There is even an implication that the two adults realize the triteness of the situation and that they—the characters, not Baumbach—want to speak from inner sources, not from a script. Baumbach pulls this off with some sting and wit.

Jeff Daniels, as the father, gives his usually reliable performance; it lacks only the extra aura that would have made Daniels another Henry Fonda. Laura Linney, who plays the mother (without eye make-up), once again seems—ah, sweet deception—more interested in the character than in her career. Baumbach's best achievement with his cast is with the two boys, Jesse Eisenberg and Owen Kline. Both young actors deal convincingly with material on the outer edge of their experience.

But the film as a whole is like an early chapter of a long novel. We have missed the first chapter about what led to the divorce, and the section we do see seems only that, a section. The story proceeds to very little conclusion. The film just goes on for a while, truthfully, then stops. It is good enough to make us want to see what happens next. ■

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER
The Prisoner on the Aisle

FOR F. SCOTT FITZGERALD, the dark night of the soul was always four o'clock in the morning. For Richard Gilman, it was usually eight o'clock at night—the hour when the curtain rose on a new production. Gilman's savage indignation over the shoddy quality of the American stage permeates his valuable new volume of collected criticism, **THE DRAMA IS COMING NOW** (Yale University Press, $37.50). A passionate advocate for the European modernists, deeply committed to the literature of the theatrical avant-garde, Gilman reveals an equally strong dislike for most American playwriting, acting, directing, and theater reviewing during his thirty years, from 1961 to 1991, as an itinerant drama critic.

Gilman was first drawn to the theater through the example of Samuel Beckett and Eric Bentley. If *Waiting for Godot* taught him that a play could be just as experimental as a painting or a novel, *The Playwright as Thinker* persuaded him that a great dramatist was also "a great mind," and that serious critics had to be primarily concerned with analyzing intelligence. If this sounds somewhat somber and cerebral, an example of the highbrow intellectual trying to cast the elusive artist in his own image, it was an important corrective to a theater that did not have much in the way of brain, only a feverish set of nerves and spasms masking a deep sentimentality.

Previously, Gilman, like many thinkers and academics, had ignored the stage, preferring his Shakespeare in the study and his Chekhov on the page. Still, a number of smart people in the late 1950s and the 1960s, largely under Bentley's influence, began to develop an interest in theater criticism (among them Wilfrid Sheed, Susan Sontag, Richard Hayes, Albert Bermel, Elizabeth Hardwick, Stanley Kauffmann, Gordon Rogoff, and John Simon). And when the liberal Catholic magazine *Commonweal* asked Gilman to join the staff, he reluctantly backed into a career that was to occupy him for the next three decades.

Following his early *Commonweal* years, he accepted a job at *Newsweek*, becoming the first minority critic of that period to operate within the orbit of the mass media. He left that magazine after three unhappy years, impatient with having to stuff a large vision into a little space, and replaced me at THE NEW REPUBLIC for another two years, after I had decamped for Yale. (Stints with *Partisan Review* and *The Nation* completed his critical odyssey.) In 1967, I invited Gilman to join the faculty at the Drama School, where he proved a remarkable teacher not only of dramatic literature, but also of dramatic writing.

Among his playwriting students were such lively artists as Robert Auletta, Albert Innaurato, Christopher Durang, Lonnie Carter, Jeff Wanshel, Wendy Wasserstein, David Epstein, Ted Talley, William Hauptman, and Harry Kondoleon, all of whom benefited from his influence. (He also mentored such future critics as Michael Feingold, Alisa Solomon, Eileen Blumenthal, and Jonathan Kalb.) During the same period, Gilman spent some time as a dramaturg with the Open Theatre, where he developed a warm relationship with Joseph Chaikin and directed a few projects. He also did a couple of directing assignments for us at Yale—a triple bill of student plays in 1969, and then Rocco Landesman's adaptation of Jerzy Kosinski's *Steps* in 1970.

IF GILMAN WAS NOT A PARTICULARLY inspired practitioner, as a playwriting mentor he had no peer. Writers would arrive at Yale as conventional realists, reliving their family conflicts in imitation of Miller, Williams, and Inge, and leave as fabulists, absurdists, and surrealists, which is to say, as converts to Gilman's aesthetic. He demanded that the drama keep pace with the latest technical advances in art and literature (particularly the *nouvelle vague*). He deplored the disjunction between "thought and activity" in our theater, and criticized the "mindless" plays of our leading dramatists (not to mention their lesser Broadway acolytes). Pointing to the Europeans, he insisted that theater be treated not as a depository for evacuated emotions, but "as a way of knowing," a path that could be reached only by abandoning plot and character. An anti-Aristotelean rejecting both catharsis and mimesis, Gilman demanded that the playwright be not just a thinker, but even a philosopher and a metaphysician.

Most of these positions are succinctly stated in the title essay of the book, "The Drama is Coming Now" (the words are Pirandello's, in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*). And if Gilman sometimes sounds there like Sir Philip Sidney berating drama for being a poor stepsister

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of the arts, he nevertheless makes a noble effort to bring this shabby orphan into the wider creative family. Clearly, he has more affinity with the literary members of that family—among them, Barthelme, Gass, Updike, Mailer, and Sontag, the subjects of an earlier book called *The Confusion of Realms*—than with the prodigal children of the American theater. Like Chekhov, another of his heroes, Gilman embraced literature as his wife, while treating the theater as his mistress.

Judging by *The Drama is Coming Now*, the theater proved a very slovenly mistress indeed. The wanton jade is continually being dressed down for infidelity to his standards and indifference to his precepts. Gilman admires the technical prowess of the English stage; he is overwhelmed by the ensemble power of the Berliner Ensemble; he is wowed by Jerzy Grotowski. But when it comes to the American theater, all Gilman can usually see is "ineptitude"—a word that he uses over and over in its several variants.

However brilliant and eloquent on the subject of dramatic literature, Gilman has a curiously limited vocabulary when it comes to describing process and performance. True, he has cogent things to say about the "terrifying righteousness" and "verbal ineptitude" of the Living Theatre upon its return to America, but his judgments on acting and directing otherwise often seem bald and unsupported. Actually, they often sound like irritable opinionating: "David Fulford's staging ... is so inept and destructive as to constitute an act of embalming"; Mike Nichols's *Uncle Vanya* is an "artistically criminal work"; "One [actor playing Peer Gynt] is shockingly inept, another totally nondescript, the third has some talent and a bit of stage presence," and so on. Instead of evoking the living presence of a performance, as Kenneth Tynan did preeminently, Gilman is content to rail against it—"a cultural disaster" (*The Changeling*), "the worst production of any play by any important contemporary since Lorca's *Blood Wedding*" (*Hop Signor*), "the evening ... was unendurable" (the APA *Seagull*), "Ralph Waite ... isn't an actor" (*The Father*), and so forth. One can understand Gilman's rage against shoddy theater; but while the typical American stage product can sometimes drive one to tearing programs and chewing ticket stubs, what distinguishes a critic from a "Himalayas" opinionator ("Did you like the Himalayas?" "Loved him, hated her") is the capacity to describe what one sees, and possibly suggest a better alternative.

GILMAN IS MUCH LESS GENeral about his dislikes in an essay that he wrote for *The New York Times* in 1977 called "How the New Theatrical Directors are Upstaging the Playwright." There he castigates such avant-garde heroes as Andrei Serban, Richard Foreman, Lee Breuer, JoAnne Akalaitis, Andre Gregory, and Robert Wilson for "directorial arrogance" in making themselves "stars" of the show. (Eric Bentley has also expressed considerable unhappiness with the auteur stage director.) Given Gilman's predilection for the new, it is odd to find him criticizing directors for the same creative daring that he urges on playwrights, especially when he so admires Peter Brook's stripped-down *King Lear* and Grotowski's radically reworked *The Constant Prince* (not to mention the plays of Brecht, which are often freewheeling directorial adaptations of earlier classics by such as Shakespeare, Gay, and Marlowe). Was it not Artaud, another of Gilman's idols, who first opened the floodgates with his barbaric yawp, "No More Masterpieces"?

While exhorting playwrights to be "great minds," Gilman expects directors to be obedient servants. He scorns their impulse to seek fresh insights into familiar classical texts; he rejects their notion that "every production has to have an 'idea' behind it, that texts have to be interpreted, or *reinterpreted*"; he insists that a classic be "simply placed literally, faithfully on stage." This is a prescription for deadly theater. In the act of re-visiting a play, the stage director is merely claiming the same intellectual privileges as the scholar-critic. Each new classical production is as much a dispute with a previous interpretation. No one can deny that some of these classical reinterpretations have been abysmal exercises in ego. But nothing in the theater is written in stone. The next stab at the play can always be a corrective.

I think Gilman is conflating his dislike of particular productions—chiefly Serban's legendary *The Cherry Orchard*, which he describes as "dragooned animation" and "arty capers"—into a shaky general principle. (He chides Serban for adding "a note of menacing industrialism when Chekhov implies no such thing"—incorrectly, since Chekhov clearly hints at this in his second-act stage direction: "In the distance a row of telegraph poles, and, far away on the horizon, the dim outlines of a big town.") And although Gilman is correct to say that updating a classical text is usually a superficial way to make it "relevant," it is not "always the wrong way" to do Shakespeare: for example, Ingmar Bergman's jackboot *Hamlet* and Jonathan Miller's Victorian *Merchant of Venice*, following the tradition of Orson Welles's black-shirt *Julius Caesar*, have greatly increased our understanding of those plays.

HOWEVER TRADITIONAL THE usually unconventional Gilman may seem in persecuting adventurous directors, he is nowhere more deeply engaged with the practice of theater than in this essay, which makes it a pleasure to argue with him. Where he is most comfortable, however, is in his treatment of playwrights, as he already demonstrated in *The Making of Modern Drama*, his groundbreaking study of eight European dramatists. Beckett, Genet, and Ionesco remain his holy trinity, but he is also able to able to welcome into the sacred circle Jack Gelber, Jean-Claude van Itallie, and Sam Shepard in the United States; Franz Xaver Kroetz and Rainer Werner Fassbinder in Germany; and Harold Pinter, John Arden, and Caryl Churchill (reservedly, though she is the best of them) in England. These writers, rather than any comedy compères or musical-comedy maestros or tragedy troglodytes (certainly not O'Neill or Miller or Albee), are who he celebrates in his theater notices. But the playwrights he admires most—namely, the classic modern European dramatists—are those given the most extended treatment in his book reviews and in the section that Gilman calls "Profiles and Legacies."

There he says much that is fresh and illuminating on the theme of Ibsen's contradictory spirit. He is wise on the issue of Brecht's ambiguous Marxism. He is knowing about the style, the language, and the erotics of Tennessee Williams, a playwright he reluctantly admires, despite falling short in "the clarity of his thought or the depth of his philosophy." He is illuminating regarding the relationship between the homoerotic and the aesthetic in the plays of Jean Genet. And he is remorseless, in his review of the autobiography *Timebends: A Life*, on the subject of Arthur Miller's bad writing: "Time

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and again language fails him, metaphors go awry, clots form in the prose." Some of us, pitying Miller's fall from critical favor, had relented in our attacks on him in later years, preferring to celebrate his role as moral witness; but while we were busy praising his integrity, Gilman was watching his prose. We were more charitable. Gilman was more honest.

On the other hand, Gilman is unusually warm, collegial, and non-competitive in evaluating other critics (this writer included, whose *Theatre of Revolt* receives a cordial review). He is admiring of George Steiner's *The Death of Tragedy*, despite its failure to appreciate modern drama. He proves how Lionel Abel is often "interestingly wrong" rather than "dully right" in *Metatheatre*. He is aware that Martin Esslin's *The Theatre of the Absurd* makes all postmodern drama seem as if it were written by the same person. He is capable of praising Herbert Blau's "clumsily written" *The Impossible Theatre* for its "devastating honesty." And he is reverent toward Eric Bentley's *The Life of the Drama* for its insights into the several forms of dramatic composition.

The Drama Is Coming Now is divided under a number of headings, according to nationality and genre, each covering the whole period of Gilman's career. Although this schematic span sometimes makes the book's nine sections look as if they are beginning and ending in the same place, it does give a sense of the breadth of Gilman's interests and the depth of his mind. Not as genial as Shaw or as original as Bentley or as witty as Tynan, Richard Gilman is nevertheless always a pleasure to read, both for his supple, unadorned, and resonant prose, and for the uncompromising nature of his aesthetic. And also for those personal qualities that Rogoff aptly describes in his preface as "a sense of balance and sheer common decency"—qualities he resolutely maintained throughout his thirty-year sentence as a prisoner on the aisle. ■

Christopher Benfey

The Family Man

LET US NOW PRAISE FAMOUS MEN,
A DEATH IN THE FAMILY,
& SHORTER FICTION
By James Agee
(Library of America, 818 pp., $35)

FILM WRITING &
SELECTED JOURNALISM
By James Agee
(Library of America, 748 pp., $40)

DURING THE HALF-CENTURY since his death in 1955, James Agee has maintained a saintly aura, though it remains unclear just what sort of martyrdom he suffered. He had in excess what used to be called "advantages." Born into comfortable circumstances in Tennessee in 1909, he was educated at Exeter and Harvard and employed by the Luce empire at *Fortune* and *Time*. Among his closest and most loyal friends were influential editors and publishers, many of whom he had known at school. Tall and rangy, Agee was (as photographs attest) spectacularly good-looking, attractive to women and to men. As a writer, he was a quick study and a dazzling stylist, adept at many forms and many voices. His vices were those of his generation: alcohol, womanizing, a marauding egotism. Not quite a *poète maudit*—where is the curse in a Harvard education or a Luce paycheck?—Agee settled for the lesser role of the bad boy in powerful organizations; he had a temper tantrum when the *Fortune* editors tampered with his piece on the cultivation of orchids. And yet the sense of martyrdom persists. His friend and *Time* colleague Robert Fitzgerald called the callous on Agee's right middle finger "one of his stigmata as a writer."

He was a talented poet, a more than talented writer of fiction, a journalist of extraordinary range and ambition, and a film critic of genius. Like many writers, he probably wished those gifts had been distributed differently: a year before his death he told the photographer Helen Levitt that poetry had been his true vocation.

The curve of Agee's career from early promise—his book of poems, *Permit Me Voyage*, won the Yale Younger Poets award in 1934, when Agee was twenty-five—to midlife collapse now seems, in Robert Lowell's phrase, the "generic life" of the World War II generation of writers: Delmore Schwartz, John Berryman, Randall Jarrell. The evidence that Agee accomplished a remarkable body of work before his death at age forty-five—he died, as Lowell did, of a heart attack in a New York taxi—now fills two packed volumes from the Library of America. I miss the best poems (none, good or bad, are included in these books), and I would have been happy to have more *Fortune* pieces—the one on Saratoga, or "The Great American Roadside"—instead of a clutch of perfunctory book reviews from *Time*. Still, these volumes properly showcase Agee's wondrous film criticism and his sometimes baffling magnum opus (with the photographer Walker Evans), *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, and so they do justice to a significant if still puzzling literary career.

EARLY AND LATE, AGEE'S GREAT theme was the family, perhaps because he had such a precarious sense of his own. His father died in a car accident when he was seven, a loss immortalized in his excruciatingly poignant novel, *A Death in the Family*, which was published posthumously. Agee's parents were mismatched in a way familiar from D. H. Lawrence—the laborer husband and the cultivated wife from town. The one-car accident occurred as Agee's father was returning from the mountains above Knoxville, where he had grown up and still felt most at home. Early on in *A Death in the Family*, father and son have lingered in a movie theater watching a Chaplin film—"that horrid little man!" according to the mother—and afterward they sit down in silence on an outcropping of limestone "like a great bundle of dirty laundry," in an empty lot overlooking the lights of Knoxville. "He felt that although his father loved their home and loved all of them, he was more lonely than the contentment of this family love could help; that it even increased his loneliness, or made it hard for him

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not to be lonely." Agee's widowed and pious mother took up residence on the grounds of the St. Andrew's School, run by Episcopal monks near Sewanee, Tennessee. A married priest there, James Flye, became Agee's mentor and surrogate father; another monk became his stepfather. The hothouse mood of the school, with its Holy Week rituals and anxious boys ("I thank Thee that I did not wet the bed this night—enough to get caught"), is vividly captured in Agee's novella *The Morning Watch*.

At Exeter and then at Harvard, Agee seemed to be in a hurry, as though all prizes would vanish at midnight. Precocious in all things sexual and literary, he progressed from infatuation with a male classmate at Exeter to an affair with a female librarian several years his senior. The pattern held with a more serious relationship at Harvard, with a chemistry professor's daughter six years older—this was Agee's first wife, Via. Meanwhile he was elected president of the Exeter *Monthly* and the *Harvard Advocate*, wrote the class ode for his Harvard graduation in 1932, and made friendships with Exeter alumni Lincoln Kirstein and Dwight Macdonald and, at Harvard, with Robert Fitzgerald. He was lucky to take two courses with the great I. A. Richards, circling from residence in China back to Cambridge, whose brilliance in reading poetry and fiction was not lost on Agee. As Fitzgerald wrote, "When [Richards] spoke of the splendors of Henry James's style or of Conrad facing the storm of the universe, we felt that he was their companion and ours in the enterprise of art."

In that enterprise Agee was already well embarked by graduation. A summer spent as a migrant worker in Nebraska and Kansas—the first of Agee's "experiments in misery," as Stephen Crane had called such episodes—gave Agee material for two expertly deployed short stories published in the *Advocate*. In the first of these, "Death in the Desert," the narrator bums a ride in a crowded car, and a quarrel erupts between the driver, Joe, and his wife over Joe's refusal to pick up a black man half-crazed and desperately entreating help on the desert road. The power in the story lies in how the narrator shifts the guilt back onto himself:

> The fact that, according to Joe, the car was crowded already, became, for a time, very important to me. I was the extra man in the car. I was the reason why an exhausted Negro remained in the desert near death. I could offer my place; I could refuse to ride any farther, unless something were done to help him. I realized, all the while, that my presence here had nothing to do with Joe's refusal to take him in, and at length this truth reduced that sport of conscience to its logical absurdity. I knew, quite soon, that there was nothing for me to do; yet I felt compulsion to say what his wife had tried to say, and a great deal more. In purely abstract argument I had talked myself red-eyed and ready for murder, on this matter of the Negro and his place; and now, when I was involved in actuality, I could say nothing and do nothing; and my silence made me confederate in a monstrous wrong.

Like much of Agee's early work, the scene has Christian resonances. (No room at the inn, the Good Samaritan.) As so often in his writing, he has placed himself as the odd man out in a family setting. In its compassion and effort to get the narrator's feelings fully told, "Death in the Desert" seems to me to owe less to the minimalism of Hemingway (the "godfather" of Agee's stories, according to Fitzgerald) than to Sherwood Anderson's stories of adolescence, such as "I Want to Know Why."

If Agee's poems are less assured than his prose, it may be in part because American poetry between the wars was less assured than American prose. Agee wanted to fit American idiom to inherited verse forms. His natural mentors, by region and dialect, should have been the Southern formalists John Crowe Ransom and Allen Tate. Instead he chose as his model Hart Crane, who committed suicide during the spring of Agee's Harvard graduation; he also admired Marvell and Hopkins, touchstones of I. A. Richards's view of poetry. The title of Agee's *Permit Me Voyage* is drawn from the third section of Crane's beautiful sequence "Voyages." Agee's title poem begins:

> Take these who will as may be: I
> Am careless now of what they fail:
> My heart and mind discharted lie
> And surely as the nervèd nail
> Appoints all quarters on the north
> So now it designates him forth
> My sovereign God my princely soul
> Whereon my flesh is priestly stole.

Robert Fitzgerald thought the neglect of Agee's poems was due to their explicit Christian themes, but kindred material did not prevent Eliot's "Ash Wednesday" or Tate's Christmas sonnets from getting a hearing. The problem with Agee's poems is that they fail to cohere around a single sensibility; they read like an anthology by different hands. The best by far are the lullabies, such as the poem that begins "Sleep, child, lie quiet, let be" and the lovely "Theme with Variations," which begins with the quatrain "Night stands up the east:/Day glides down the west:/Lax in his fur the beast/The bird with brow in breast." The fourth variation draws its erotic charge from the Tennessee woods:

> Where now the lizard and the rinded
> snake
> That skipped and slurred their lengths
> and lusted in the heat?
> Where the lean bugs that on the
> water break
> Their rapid dances and each other
> eat?
>
> The lithe-tongued butterfly where
> now is he
> That chanced his bright wings on the
> unequal air?
> Where the mean hornet and the
> sweet-groined bee:
> Now they are under night how may
> these bloodless fare?

It was Agee's good luck that Archibald MacLeish—a poet, a Yale man, and one of the founding editors of *Fortune*—encouraged him to gather his early poems together and submit them to the Yale Younger Poets series, for which MacLeish himself conveniently served as judge.

The bounties of *Fortune*, where Agee worked from 1932 until 1939, were a mixed blessing, but mainly a blessing. The smart and efficient editors allowed Agee to show off his orchestral prose when appropriate, as in the gorgeous opening blasts of his magisterial piece on the Tennessee Valley Authority:

> The Tennessee River system begins
> on the worn magnificent crests of the

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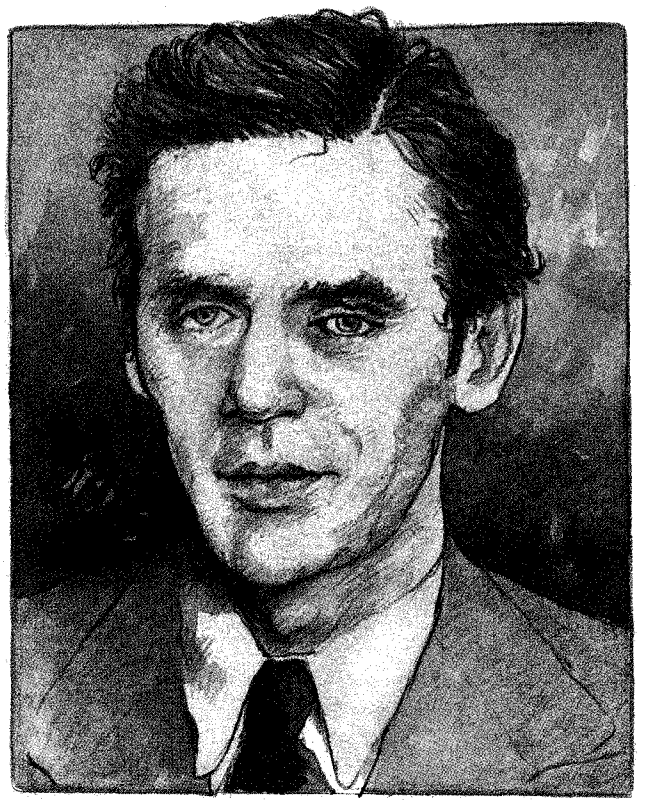
southern Appalachians, among the earth's oldest mountains, and the Tennessee River shapes its valley into the form of a boomerang, bowing it to its sweep through seven states. Near Knoxville the streams still fresh from the mountains are linked and thence the master stream spreads the valley most richly southward, swims past Chattanooga and bends down into Alabama to roar like blown smoke through the floodgates of Wilson Dam, to slide becalmed along the crop-cleansed fields of Shiloh, to march due north across the high diminished plains of Tennessee and through Kentucky spreading marshes toward the valley's end where finally, at the toes of Paducah, in one wide glass golden swarm the water stoops forward and continuously dies into the Ohio.

When they tried to curb his excesses, as in the flat, overlong, and leering piece on the orchid business, Agee's editors were probably right to do so. His piece on cockfighting, from 1934, with a footnote on how boxing gloves derived from the protective muffs fitted over the roosters' spurs, is much more interesting. Both articles, with their probing of the mysteries of tight communities, seem in retrospect preparation for Agee's *Fortune* assignment of 1936 to cover the struggle of Southern sharecroppers during the Depression.

Agee's writing always had most authority when he was drawing on his native landscape, finding the "master stream" pulsing near Knoxville. Earlier in 1936, before taking on the sharecropper assignment, Agee had written one of his best things, a lyrical evocation of his childhood called "Knoxville: Summer 1915." (It was published in *Partisan Review* in 1938 and later appended to *A Death in the Family*.) "We are talking now of summer evenings in Knoxville, Tennessee," it begins, "in the time that I lived there so successfully disguised to myself as a child." Agee's evocation of men in the evening watering their lawns is lyrically beautiful, and mysterious beyond any obvious symbolism: "the fathers of families, each in his space of lawn, his shirt fishlike pale in the unnatural light and his face nearly anonymous, hosing their lawns." As so often in Agee's work, one detects the ache attached to families, and the longing for something transcending paternal loneliness, achieved for a moment then lost in a vision of the family gathered on the lawn:

> On the rough wet grass of the back yard my father and mother have spread quilts. We all lie there, my mother, my father, my uncle, my aunt, and I too am lying there.... By some chance, here they are, all on this earth; and who shall ever tell the sorrow of being on this earth, lying, on quilts, on the grass, in a summer evening, among the sounds of the night.



James Agee by Jack Coughlin for The New Republic

One can see why Samuel Barber was moved to do a setting of "Knoxville: Summer 1915" for soprano and orchestra in 1947, though the music was already there for all to hear.

In July 1936, Agee and the photographer Walker Evans spent three weeks with three tenant families in Hale County, Alabama. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* was the four-hundred-page fulfillment of Agee's *Fortune* assignment on sharecroppers, and it hardly needs saying that the results did not meet the expectations of the editors, who were happy to cede Agee the rights to try to turn his mushrooming article into a book. The book was eventually published in 1941 and sold only six hundred copies, despite Lionel Trilling's judgment that it was a "great book" and "the most realistic and important moral effort of our generation." Re-issued by Houghton Mifflin in 1960, with a foreword and additional photographs by Walker Evans, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* finally found its audience. "Agee worked in what looked like a rush and a rage," Evans wrote. "In Alabama he was possessed with the business, jamming it all into the days and the nights. He must not have slept." The contrast between Agee's feverish prose and the dignified daguerreotype-like quiet of Evans's frontal portraits of family members, cabins, and shoes is one of the great strengths of the book.

Agee actually developed two kinds of prose for the occasion. One closely resembles the lyricism of "Knoxville: Summer 1915," as in the aria fifty pages in: "All over Alabama, the lamps are out. Every leaf drenches the touch; the spider's net is heavy. The roads lie there, with nothing to use them. The fields lie there, with nothing at work in them, neither man nor beast." Agee's dreamlike meander through New Orleans, "stirring, rattling, and sliding faintly in its fragrance," almost sounds like Kerouac in its reckless projection: "taxis are still parked along Dauphine Street and the breastlike, floral air is itchy with the stilettos and embroiderings above black blood drumthroes of an eloquent cracked indiscoverable cornet, which exists only in the imagination and somewhere in the past, in the broken heart of Louis Armstrong."

Agee's other voice, inspired by a careful and envious study of Evans's astringent photographs, is patient, understated, dedicated to the task of exhaustively describing all that is there to see:

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> On the floor at center, two by two, toes to the wall, a pair of woman's black slippers, run-over at the low heels. A pair of workshoes, very old, molded to the shape of the feet. A pair of girl's slippers, whited over scrubbed clay and streaked again with clay. A pair of little-boy's high black shoes, broken at the toes and worn through the soles, the toes curled up sharply; looped straps at the heels: thick clay scrubbed off ... These shoes, particularly those of the children, are somewhat gnawn, and there are rat turds on the floor.

Beneath the description, however, were indignation and sorrow—the groundswell of Agee's populism. That sympathy never veered into communism. "The Party fished in vain for Agee," as Fitzgerald dryly remarked. And while Agee was firmly on the side of the tenant farmers against the predations of capitalism, his deeper theme was not the struggle of the working man but the persistence and the survival of families.

In his portrait of shoes—the woman's, the man's, the girl's, and little boy's—and in many other passages, Agee's pent-up longing for family happiness found its way into *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, the original title of which was *Three Tenant Families*. The image of a family assembled on a quilt from "Knoxville: Summer 1915" became an obsession for Agee. He convinced himself that one of the young sharecroppers, whom he called Emma, shared his fantasy of spending "her last few days alive having a gigantic good time in bed ... with Walker and with me, whom she is curious about and attracted to, and who are at the same moment tangible and friendly and not at all to be feared, and on the other hand have for her the mystery of glamour almost of mythological creatures." One of the most depressing passages in Laurence Bergreen's biography of Agee records the all too literal working-out of this fantasy, when Agee persuaded Evans to make love to Agee's second wife, Alma, while Agee sat at the foot of the bed sobbing. Of the intricacies of Agee's love life perhaps the less said the better, except to remark that his relatively successful third marriage, to the Austrian émigrée and *Fortune* staffer Mia Fritsch, coincided with his most equable and fruitful period, when he reviewed films at *Time* and then, from 1942 to 1948, served as regular film critic for *The Nation*.

JAMES AGEE ON FILM IS ONE OF THE glories of American or any other criticism. In his reviews he managed to steer clear of both intellectual puffery (film as high art) and slumming in pop culture. He recognized from the start that there were films of consuming quality and interest, and that the steady and intelligent gaze that he had directed at Walker Evans's photographs and at tenant farmers' shoes could yield passages of writing more assured than anything in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. When reviewing a film allowed him to sneak up on some gigantic reputation like Shakespeare's (Laurence Olivier's *Henry V*) or Hemingway's (*The Killers*), Agee found fresh things to say about both the film and the source. Hemingway's talk, he observed, so magical on the page, "sounds, on the screen, as cooked-up and formal as an eclogue." Olivier's Crispin's Day oration before battle "is not just a brilliant bugle-blat: it is the calculated yet self-exceeding improvisation, at once self-enjoying and selfless, of a young and sleepless leader, rising to a situation wholly dangerous and glamorous, and wholly new to him."

Agee's film criticism sounds like that too, a calculated yet self-exceeding improvisation. Its culmination is the twenty-five-page essay he wrote for *Life* in September 1949 titled "Comedy's Greatest Era." Agee's premise was simple: "As soon as the screen began to talk, silent comedy was pretty well finished." In a Bob Hope film, "the fun slackens between laughs like a weak clothesline." What Agee loved in silent movies was the same thing that he loved in nineteenth-century daguerreotypes and New Orleans jazz, an unselfconscious authenticity of the kind Schiller called "naïve" rather than sentimental. Agee began his essay in a mock-analytic mode: "In the language of screen comedians four of the main grades of laugh are the titter, the yowl, the bellylaugh and the boffo. The titter is just a titter. The yowl is a runaway titter. Anyone who has ever had the pleasure knows all about a bellylaugh. The boffo is the laugh that kills." Agee examined the smiles of the great comedians: Harold Lloyd's "thesaurus of smiles" which "could at a moment's notice blend prissiness, breeziness and asininity," or Buster Keaton—the "most deeply 'silent' of the silent comedians"—whose smile "was as deafeningly out of key as a yell." The twitchings of Harry Langdon's clueless face "were signals of tiny discomforts too slowly registered by a tinier brain; quick, squirty little smiles showed his almost prehuman pleasures, his incurably premature trustfulness." And then there was Chaplin, some kind of ultimate for Agee: "Of all comedians he worked most deeply and most shrewdly within a realization of what a human being is, and is up against."

From writing about films Agee yielded to the temptation to help make them. He collaborated with John Huston on *The African Queen* and worked on the screenplay (re-written by the director, Charles Laughton) of *The Night of the Hunter*, a gothic fairy tale about a brother and sister in flight from a nightmare stepfather. Still photogenic, Agee played some bit parts, too, typecast as a drunk in his own adaptation of Stephen Crane's "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" in 1951 and, the following year, as a poet in a TV dramatization of Lincoln.

BY THE EARLY 1950S, AGEE WAS famous and in demand, but he was also dying. He suffered his first heart attack in 1951 and had serious heart trouble thereafter. The sense of urgency so evident in his youth returned in spades. He turned down Huston's offer to write an adaptation of *Moby-Dick*, working instead on an original screenplay about Gauguin. He worked relentlessly on his novel, *A Death in the Family*, aware, surely, of the title's potentially double meaning: "I add Agee's death to his hero's and can't forget the epitaph," Robert Lowell wrote in 1958. One of the last things Agee wrote was a final, ironic lullaby—to be sung by the crowd "like middle-aged Sunday School children"—solicited but turned down by Lillian Hellman for the musical *Candide*:

> Purest child, our hearts we leave thee,
> All we hope and hold most dear;
> Shining one, we must believe thee,
> Fair one, fare where we would fear.

Agee certainly had his demons; but if you consider what he accomplished in a scant quarter-century, it is hard to think of him as a martyr to anything beyond, in his own words, what a human being is, and is up against. ■

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Benny Morris
Details and Lies

ATLAS OF PALESTINE 1948: RECONSTRUCTING PALESTINE
By Salman Abu Sitta
(Palestine Land Society, 450 pp., $200)

ATLASES ARE NEVER AS neutral as they seem. Buried deep in this giant handsome atlas is a statement of purpose: "Firstly the obliteration of Palestine history and lost memory (place names, records, etc.) can be reversed and re-recorded.... This Atlas ... is a step in the right direction. Secondly, the reconstruction of the Palestinian landscape is quite feasible from [sic] physical point of view." The second point defines, if somewhat obscurely, the book's political goal, which is to delegitimate Zionism and Israel and to promote the re-Palestinization of Palestine/the Land of Israel, through a process that includes the return of the refugees and the dismantling of the Jewish state.

To recover Palestinian history and memory, Salman Abu Sitta, a former member of the Palestine National Council and a leading proponent of the return of Palestinian refugees to what is now Israel, attempts to re-create Palestine as it was before the *Nakba* (catastrophe, in Arabic), or the war of 1947–1949 that shattered Palestinian society and displaced about two-thirds of its people from their homes. In 1948 and 1949, the landscape of the bulk of Palestine—that 78 percent of the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean that became the State of Israel—was radically transformed. The bulk of the Arab villages, built of stone or mud, were obliterated and replaced by red-roofed Israeli *kibbutzim* and *moshavim*, and their fields often changed in crop and color. The former Arab or semi-Arab towns (Beisan, Ramle, Lydda, Safad, Haifa, Beisan, Jaffa) were filled with Jewish immigrants and modernized. In a brief span of time, Palestine underwent a political, economic, and demographic revolution. Abu Sitta portrays this giant transformation through hundreds of maps, graphs, and tables, and a lengthy introductory text.

The book is divided in two: a hundred-page General Review, in which Abu Sitta narrates the historical background and the war of 1948 and describes aspects of the economy of British Mandate Palestine, bolstered by myriad tables and graphs; and then the *Atlas* itself, with almost three hundred pages of maps. The bulk of the maps are touched up ("digitized") British Mandate *Survey of Palestine* 1:20,000 maps from 1944–1945. (I'm not sure I understand why Abu Sitta did not simply reproduce the original maps.) They are introduced by fifteen pages of general maps based on the Survey of Palestine 1:100,000 series, which appear gridded with small, numbered squares corresponding to the following 1:20,000 series. The *Atlas* covers only 60 percent of the land surface of Mandatory Palestine (15,000 square kilometers out of 26,000)—from just south of Beersheba in the south to Metulla and Dan in the north—the core, inhabited part of the country. The southern and central parts of the Negev are omitted, as is the bulk of the West Bank. This vast treasure-house of maps, the like of which has never before been housed under one roof, is a major boon to future researchers.

The maps are straightforward and scientific. Far less so is the historical and descriptive narrative that precedes them. Abu Sitta's narrative is unabashedly propagandistic and often factually wrong. His promotion of the Palestinian case is relentless and his vilification of Zionism and Israel merciless. And he does not shrink from chicanery and manipulation of the highest (or lowest) order. The devil is in the details, and when it comes to numbers Abu Sitta is quite a devil.

He is forever inflating and, correspondingly, deflating numbers—Arab and Jewish population figures, Arab and Jewish landholdings. The presumption seems to be that the fewer Jews or the less Jewish-owned land in Palestine at any given time, the less legitimate are the Jewish national claims. So on page eleven we find Abu Sitta asserting that the country's population in 1914–1915 consisted of 602,000 Muslims, 81,000 Christians, and 38,754 Jews. Past histories have asserted that there were between 60,000 and 85,000 Jews in Palestine at the time. Abu Sitta gives a reference for his "38,754"—page ten in Justin McCarthy's *The Population of Palestine*, a classic work on Palestine's demography during late Ottoman and British Mandate times. And, indeed, 38,754 appears in Table 1.4D in McCarthy. But then, on pages twenty-three and twenty-four, McCarthy re-calibrates the official Ottoman Government statistics, taking account of permanent "tourists," and so on—and concludes that "the total Jewish population of Palestine in 1914 was thus approximately 60,000."

IS THIS MISTAKE A FLUKE? DID the Palestinian researcher simply overlook some relevant passages? I'm afraid not. The mendacity here is systematic. There are dozens of cases in which there is no correspondence between Abu Sitta's assertions in the text and the references that he purportedly bases them on. On page sixty, he tells us: "There were massacres in 1948 [at] al-Tira and Qazaza. In al-Tira old and infirm men and women were burnt alive by [Israelis] pouring gasoline over them." He refers us to his footnote 230: "About 30–50 old villagers were burnt alive. See Table 3.2." We turn to Table 3.2, which lists 205 alleged Israeli War Crimes, where it says, under the heading Tira—"28 al-Tira villagers who sought refuge in 'Ayn Ghazal burned alive there." The source for this is given as "[Walid] Khalidi, [*All That Remains*], 198, UNTSO." But in *All That Remains*, Khalidi's encyclopedic survey of the Arab villages depopulated and destroyed in 1948, it says this: "The Secretary General of the Arab League reported that 28 refugees from al-Tira were burned alive there in late July. But a United Nations observer [from UNTSO] visited the area on 28 July and found 'no evidence to support claims of a massacre,' according to UN Mediator Count Folke Bernadotte."

Abu Sitta practices a similar deceit in relation to the Arab al Samniyya tribe in western Galilee, Number 192 in Table 3.2: "30 Oct. 1948: Operation Hiram: emptied the village; extensive looting in and around the villages; several hundred taken as prisoners and several hundred

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killed." He again cites "Khalidi, pp. 5–6." (Note Abu Sitta's almost imperceptible switch from "village" to "villages," and his reference first to prisoners and then to "several hundred killed," implying, perhaps, a slaughter of POWs.) But a look at the relevant passage in Khalidi reveals a different picture. Khalidi writes, under "Arab al Samniyya":

> Safsaf, some 25 kms. to the east of Arab al Samniyya ... fell before dawn on 29 October 1948; on 30 October it [Safsaf] was the scene of one of several massacres committed during the operation [Hiram] ... The following day, an Israeli army spokesman, quoted in *The New York Times*, said that several hundred of the area's defenders had been killed and another several hundred taken prisoner.

For Abu Sitta, this is proof of a massacre at Arab al Samniyya.

In general, Abu Sitta is eager to inflate the number of Jewish atrocities in 1948. (He never mentions Arab atrocities.) But his table of "205 [Jewish] War Crimes" (Table 3.2) mostly refers to the destruction of houses and Arab deaths in battle; only a fraction refer to real atrocities. And the list brims with hyperbole and errors. In Number 193, under "Azazma" (a Negev Bedouin tribe), he writes: "Jan. 1949, People were shot by machineguns and from helicopters"; but Israel possessed no helicopters. Though this is an atlas about 1948, the killing of British troops and alleged atrocities committed in the 1950s and even the 1960s are thrown in for good (or bad) measure, merely to inflate numbers.

Abu Sitta is similarly unreliable about landholdings. He asserts that "over 92 percent of the land held by Israel today was confiscated from Palestinians"; and that "Arabs and other non-Jews" owned 24,670,000 dunams, and the Jews 1,514,000 dunams, of Palestine's land surface. He cites the British Mandate government's classic *Survey of Palestine*, II, Table 2, page 566 as his source. But he doesn't tell his readers that the category "Arab and other non-Jewish" owners includes state lands, and that the *Survey* from 1946, and the *Supplement to Survey of Palestine* from 1947, state that only 5.2 million dunams were actually owned by Jews and Arabs. The rest (mostly in the Negev) was state land. Hence, in reality, Jews owned about 6 to 7 percent of Palestine's land surface, and the Arabs owned around 20 percent, and the rest was public or state-owned. And, given that no Palestinian Arab state was established, Israel was Mandate Palestine's successor state and heir to the state lands. Abu Sitta also fails to tell his readers that many if not most Palestinian notable families, including the Husseinis, Nashashibis, al Alamis, Dajanis, Abd al Hadis, and so on—the leaders of the Palestinian national movement—sold land to the Jews, and that the meagerness of Zionist purchases was largely dictated by a lack of funds, not by any Arab indisposition to sell.

For Abu Sitta, the story of Zionism, and of the Zionist-Arab conflict, begins with the Balfour Declaration of November 1917, when the British sold what he regards as the Palestinian Arab patrimony down the river. He makes no mention of the three-thousand-year connection of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel; of the pogroms in Russia in the early 1880s; or of Arab harassment—and occasional murder—of the Zionist settlers before 1917. He then nimbly flits over the mass Arab attacks (or pogroms) against the settlers in 1920, 1921, and 1929, calling them "clashes" and "incidents." In the last of these, unmentioned by Abu Sitta, 133 Jews were murdered, 66 of them defenseless ultra-orthodox Jews in Hebron knifed and axed by an Arab mob.

This is a deeply anti-British as well as anti-Zionist narrative. The two come together in Abu Sitta's description of 1947–1948. The British are forever plotting and conspiring with the Zionists against the Palestinians. Britain's crude anti-Zionist *volte face* of 1939, and its subsequent cruel anti-immigration measures, are given short shrift or ignored. The British, he writes, helped to set up the Zionists' militia while preventing (or so he implies) the Palestinians from creating their own.

Unknowledgeable readers may come away from this volume knowing that in 1948 hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs became "refugees" but not knowing that Palestine between November 1947 and January 1949 was engulfed in war, and that the tragedy of the Palestinians stemmed from and was caused by that war. The *Atlas* is not really about "Palestine [in] 1948," it is about the Palestinian Arabs and their exodus. It tells us almost nothing about how the war began, who began it, how it unfolded, where and when the battles and campaigns were fought, why and how the Arab states intervened, and the connection between the war and the emergence of the refugee problem. The reader will come away from this *Atlas* believing that the Zionists in 1947–1949 unleashed a pre-planned campaign of "ethnic cleansing" against hapless Palestinian Arab villagers and townspeople, who were simply sitting at home embroidering folksy shirts.

From reading this *Atlas*, the reader will not know that it was the Palestinian Arab onslaught on the Jewish community in Palestine in November to December 1947 that provoked Jewish counter-violence, which then triggered the Arab exodus; and that it was the follow-up invasion of the country by the armies of the surrounding Arab states in May to June 1948 that turned what might have been an ephemeral phenomenon into a still larger tragedy, consolidating and finalizing, as it were, the refugee status of the fleeing communities. Instead Abu Sitta tells a different story: first, that "the idea of population transfer had always been a major component of Zionist theory and practice"; and second, that the Jews may have danced deliriously in the streets on November 29, 1947, when the news broke of the U.N. General Assembly endorsement of partition, but in reality they always wanted and aimed for the creation of a Jewish state encompassing the whole of the Land of Israel and had always planned for the expulsion of the Arab inhabitants.

As to the first assertion, Abu Sitta refers the reader (footnote forty-three) to works by the Israeli Arab historian Nur Masalha, who has indeed always argued that the Zionist movement, from the first, intended to expel the Arabs and pre-planned the 1948 expulsion. But the history of the idea of "transfer" among the Zionist leaders is more nuanced. It is true that Zionist leaders, including Theodor Herzl, Chaim Weizmann, and David Ben-Gurion, at times spoke of the desirability of transferring Arabs from Palestine to make way for Jews. And it is true that between 1936 and 1945—against the backdrop of burgeoning anti-Semitism, then the destruction of European Jewry, and of Palestinian Arab attacks on the Yishuv, which led to British curtailment of Jewish immigration to Palestine—there was increased support of transfer, which an embattled Zionist leadership desperately felt might facilitate the

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salvation of their doomed European brethren by providing space in Palestine for their absorption. Moreover, in 1937 the British Peel Commission had itself proposed the transfer of Arab inhabitants out of the area of the Jewish state-to-be as a necessary element of a lasting settlement. This gave the idea an international imprimatur.

All this is true. But it is only a part of the truth. More often and more consistently, from 1881–1947, the Zionist leaders spoke of overcoming the problem of the Arab majority by massive Jewish immigration, possibly coupled with partition, so that the area allotted for Jewish statehood would have a Jewish majority. "Transfer" was never adopted as the platform of the Zionist movement or of any of its main political parties. Nor did the Yishuv enter the 1948 war with a plan or policy of expulsion. Indeed, as late as March 24, 1948, Israel Galili, chief of the Haganah National Command, issued a secret blanket order to all units to abide, in their behavior toward the Arab communities inside the designated Jewish state areas, by the Zionist movement's long-standing policy of co-existence and mutual respect for life and property. Similarly, the powerful settlement executives, when planning in secret sessions from December 1947 to January 1948 the future rural development of the Jewish state, explicitly brushed aside all thought of transferring the Arab minority out of the Jewish state. The protocols of their deliberations are available and open to scholars, as is Galili's order—if only Palestinian historians and geographers would deign to visit the archives in their "research." (This *Atlas* parades several hundred footnotes, but none indicates that Abu Sitta ever visited an archive.)

As to the second assertion, that the Jews never really accepted partition, it is an outright falsehood. It is true that in 1937, in response to the Peel recommendations, the Zionist leadership, while formally accepting the principle of partition, was ambivalent, with Ben-Gurion secretly hoping that acceptance would enable the Zionists to take over all of Palestine, in stages, down the road. But in 1947, following the Holocaust, the mainstream of the Zionist movement was willing to take whatever history had to offer, and the Jewish Agency Executive, the Yishuv's "government," accepted the U.N. partition plan, and the enthusiasm of the dancing crowds in the streets was genuine. To undermine this picture, Abu Sitta trots out a series of contrary quotations by Ben-Gurion—but they are all from statements made or letters written in 1937–1938, in response to the Peel recommendations, in completely different circumstances. Abu Sitta does not tell his readers this, and implies that the statements were a response to the 1947 partition plan. This is chicanery.

BUT LET US RETURN TO ABU Sitta's brief acknowledgements that a war—which for the Jewish community in Palestine was a war for survival—was actually going on in 1948. Here is his description of the war's beginning:

> The UN recommendation to divide Palestine into two states heralded a new period of conflict and suffering in Palestine ... Palestinians declared a three-day general strike on December 2, 1947 in opposition to the plan, which they viewed as illegal and a further attempt to advance western interests in the region regardless of the cost to the native population.

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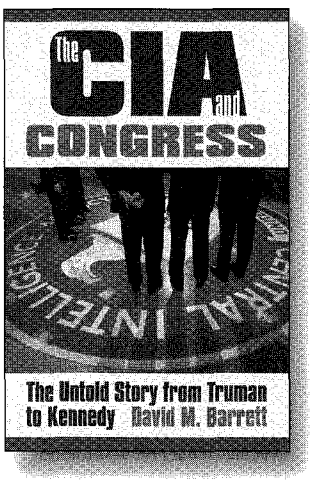

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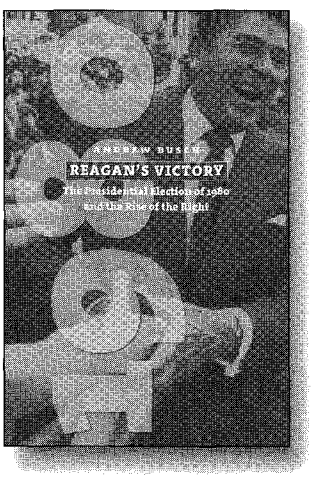

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On Day and Night

And as the neighbors' guests retire, coaxing their cars
into the snow (we're gazing through the curtain
into winter's pale hub), two girls gaze up. They're all
going home, like wheels correcting
into steering hands, or drawn breath returning to the air,
but you can't come back to anywhere—there's no perfect here
and there, or now and then—but here we are,
again. A silverfish crosses the windowpane. We peer
into the street, and up at the stranded moon. White wheel,
black field. Black winter, white road. White silence,
black wind. White cars, black wires.

JAMES ARTHUR

The day after the UN adopted Resolution 181 ... the Zionist leadership called upon all Jews in Palestine aged 17–25 to register for military service. David Ben-Gurion ... immediately put "Plan C" (Gimel), finalized in May 1946, into action.... Plan C ... aimed to put pressure on the local Palestinian population.... The [Jews] had 185,000 able-bodied males aged 16–50, mostly military trained.... The Palestinians had about 2,500 militia men.... They had old rifles, few machine guns, no artillery and no tanks ... no central command and no wireless communications. At best they were only able to mount defensive operations, rushing to a village after cries of help.... In December 1947, the Haganah attacked the Arab quarters in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa, killing 35 Arabs.... In the first three months of 1948, Jewish terrorists carried out numerous operations, blowing up buses and Palestinian homes. Even at this stage, early signs of ethnic cleansing became apparent.

This is a dishonest account. A more accurate description would go something like this: the U.N. General Assembly voted by more than a two-thirds majority in favor of partition and the establishment of Jewish and Arab states. The Palestinians and the Arab states rejected the resolution and vowed to prevent its implementation. Throughout the Arab world the cry went up for "jihad." On November 30, 1947, the day after the partition vote, Arab gunmen ambushed two Jewish buses near Petah Tikva, killing seven passengers and wounding others, and Arab snipers began firing from Jaffa into Tel Aviv's streets, killing a passerby and wounding others. These attacks marked the start of the war. The Arab Higher Committee, the Palestinian Arab community's "government," called for a general strike, in the course of which an Arab mob poured out of Jerusalem's Old City and looted and torched the New Commercial District. The civil war had begun.

The Jewish Agency hoped the violence would blow over, and for ten days the Haganah remained completely on the defensive. But with the British failing to suppress the disorganized Arab onslaught, the Haganah began to mobilize on December 9. The Haganah, a national organization with a unified command structure, had 35,000 members, and the two dissident organizations, the Irgun and the Lehi, had another 3,500 men between them. None had artillery or tanks. From then on, Haganah (and the Irgun and Lehi) units began to retaliate following Arab attacks. These reprisals, especially those by the dissident Irgun and Lehi organizations, which were often terroristic, contributed to the snowball effect and helped to widen the conflagration.

The Palestinian Arabs—owing to disunity and incompetence, not to goodwill or pacifism—had never managed to put together a national militia, or to arm themselves properly. Palestinian military power consisted of separate village militias, roving armed bands that attacked Jewish settlements and convoys, and then, from January 1948, four thousand troops, with artillery, of the Arab Liberation Army (ALA), who infiltrated the country from Syria after being trained and armed by the Arab League. This hodgepodge of irregulars managed by late March 1948 to halt Jewish convoy traffic and to besiege, and to mortally threaten, isolated Jewish communities, notably Jerusalem. By then, tens of thousands of Arabs and Jews, fearing war's fury, had moved out of embattled or vulnerable urban and rural areas. For the Palestinians, this marked the start of the refugee exodus. (Incidentally, Plan C, never implemented, was defensive, and designed only to thwart Arab attacks on Jewish settlements and Jewish traffic.)

Between November 1947 and March 1948, the Jews remained strategically on the defensive, and did not conquer or destroy Arab villages. (There were two exceptions, Qisariya and Arab Sukrir.) Things changed radically in early April 1948: the Haganah, with its back to the wall, especially in Jerusalem and along the roads, and facing imminent invasion by the Arab states' armies, switched to the offensive, and within six weeks overran Arab areas, including Jaffa and (Arab) Haifa, and defeated the Palestinian militias, inducing chaos and mass flight. The Jewish militias in 1948 never "blew up buses" (except empty ones), as Abu Sitta says—but it is a nice propagandistic touch, given the reality of the past few years, in which Palestinian suicide bombers have frequently targeted crowded Jewish buses.

The figure 185,000 for Jewish troops at the start of 1948 is preposterous. The Israeli army, the IDF, at its maximal mobilization, reached 110,000 at the start of 1949. In truth, the forces in Palestine during the civil war half of 1948 (November 1947 to mid-May 1948), were more or less evenly matched in terms of armed manpower. The roughly eight hundred Arab villages and towns of Palestine had, between them, some 25,000 to 30,000 armed men (albeit with inadequate ammunition stockpiles). Add to this the reasonably well-armed roving bands and the ALA, and one gets a force about equal to the Haganah's. The Haganah probably had fewer arms, but they were better munitioned.

But the real difference lay in organization and mentality. The Jews were relatively well organized, and thought and acted like a nation. The Palestinians were not organized, and mostly acted out of a village-centered mentality: there was no national mobilization; each village fought alone, and fell alone, and those not engaged kept their distance from the trouble. The Palestinians had only themselves to blame for their poor preparation and performance in 1948.

As with the Palestinian onslaught on the Yishuv in November to December 1947, so with the onslaught of the Arab states' armies on Israel in mid-May 1948—we are treated to half-truths and downright lies. "None" of the Arab invading armies, Abu Sitta tells us, "had the intention to exceed the limits of the Arab state in the Partition Plan.... Syri-

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an forces ... tried and failed to capture two Israeli settlements south of Tiberias.... The Arab Legion [Jordan's army] maintained defensive positions in the Old City of Jerusalem.... [The] Egyptian [Army] ... like the other Arab forces, at no point ... attempt[ed] to enter the designated Jewish state."

Some of what he says here is true: the Syrian Army did fail to take the kibbutzim Degania Aleph and Degania Bet on May 20; the Arab Legion did maintain "defensive positions" in the Old City. But really we are being treated to a big lie, which always contains small truths. The Syrian Army, after invading Israel and before being bested at the Deganias, conquered and destroyed two kibbutzim, Masada and Shaar Hagolan, on May 18, inside Israel; the Iraqi Army invaded Israeli territory and unsuccessfully assaulted Kibbutz Gesher and nearby positions before moving to the northern West Bank; and the Egyptian Army, while halting, or being forced by the IDF to halt, at Isdud (Ashdod) in early June 1948, invaded and conquered Israeli territory between the Gaza Strip and Beersheba and between Majdal (Ashkelon) and Beit Jibrin. Lastly, while the Jordanian Army did not invade Israeli territory, it did much more than take up "defensive positions" in the Old City of Jerusalem. It conquered, and razed, the Jewish Quarter of the Old City and took up positions in Latrun, Lydda, and Ramle, blocking the main Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road and laying siege to the holy city. And on May 12–14, before the pan-Arab invasion began, the Legion attacked and destroyed the settlements of the Etzion bloc.

In short, the neighboring Arab states (save for Lebanon) and Iraq simultaneously, on May 15, attacked Israel, its settlements, and its territory. One of their aims was to destroy, or at least to mortally wound, Israel, if not to eradicate the Yishuv. The documentary proof is abundant. The Arab armies' actions in mid-May speak louder than a thousand atlases. That the Arab armies were "ill-prepared" and incompetent does not diminish the fact of their aggression. And there can be little doubt that had the invading armies, including Jordan's, encountered no or weak resistance, they would have pushed on to Tel Aviv.

IT IS ALSO WELL TO RECALL, AS Abu Sitta does not, that, as the Palestinians launched their war against the Yishuv, and as the Arab states with ever-increasing fervor between December 1947 and early May 1948 threatened to join them, most Zionists had one, or rather two, memories at the forefront of their minds: Hebron in 1929 and Europe in 1939–1945. Most were sure that, given half a chance, Arab mobs and gunmen would massacre them and their families, as they had done in Hebron in 1929, and re-enact a slaughter to rival the recently concluded catastrophe in Europe. Such things were hardly unimaginable. After all, none other than Azzam Pasha, the secretary general of the Arab League, had warned in mid-May that the pan-Arab invasion would resemble the Mongolian rape of Baghdad in 1258, when 800,000 people were allegedly slaughtered.

So the Yishuv was determined not to give the Arabs half a chance, and to do what was necessary to assure its survival. In April and early May, this required—as Ben-Gurion and the Haganah brass saw it, and who really can fault them?—the destruction of Arab militia bases along the main roads between the Yishuv's centers of population, and along its borders, which were about to be invaded by the Arab armies. This was a civil war between irregular militias, and the Arab villages were the Arab militias' bases (as the Jewish settlements were the Jewish militia's bases). This was the grim logic behind the Haganah's conquest and demolition of the Arab villages in its operations in the spring of 1948: either overpower the Arab forces or go under.

ABU SITTA'S *ATLAS* SUFFERS from acute inflation of Arab refugee and village numbers. At one point he speaks of 935,000 refugees in 1948, though most historians would put the true number at around 700,000 (as did the U.N. in 1949). He also speaks of 530 Arab villages and "244 smaller villages" depopulated in 1948, though most historians, including Walid Khalidi, put the figure at around 400.

But it is not only modern history that suffers through Abu Sitta's efforts to blacken Zionism and enhance the Palestinian case; the ancients, too, are dragged in. Longevity enhances territorial claims. Hence Abu Sitta asserts (as do the Palestinian Authority textbooks used in Gaza and the West Bank) that the Palestinian Arabs are the direct descendants of the Canaanite tribes conquered and suppressed by the Israelites back in the Second Millennium B.C.E. He writes, regarding Jerusalem, that "during all periods of history [starting with the Canaanites of 5000 years ago], and in spite of [sic] succession of rulers, the bulk of [sic] population remained the same stock." Abu Sitta is here positing a genealogical link between the Canaanites and the Arabs, so as to further the Palestinians' territorial claims.

Now it is quite possible, indeed it is probable, that "Canaanite" genes passed down the ages through the successive ethnic groups that inhabited the country to the Arab invaders in the seventh century. But to say that Cannanites and Palestinian Arabs are of the "same stock" is stretching it. If anything, it could be argued that the Hebrews or Israelites or Jews who conquered Palestine in the thirteenth century B.C.E. and lived in it more or less continuously down to the fifth and sixth centuries C.E. intermarried with the inhabitants they found in place and co-opted their genes. If any reached the Arabs, they necessarily reached them via the Jews (and other non-Arabs) who lived in the country down to the Arab invasion.

But a common gene pool is only one element, and not the most significant element, of peoplehood. Far more im-

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portant are a shared language and culture, a common history and historical consciousness, and, often, a common religion. And to say that the Palestinians are descendants of the Canaanites in these respects is absurd. The Palestinians are Arabs, in their language, culture, religion, and history. Palestinians remember the battle of Ein Jalut and Saladin and the Crusades; they recall the glories of the Arab Middle Ages; some even lament the fall of Muslim Spain. But ask a Palestinian to name Canaanite or Philistine kings, and he will look at you as if you fell from Mars.

At the same time Abu Sitta does his best to dissociate the Jews from Palestine. He concedes that "the Jews occupied [Jerusalem] from about 1,000 BC to 586 BC, when it was conquered by the Persians [sic—it was the Babylonians]." But he then says that the Persians were followed by the Greeks, the Romans, and the Muslim Arabs, who conquered the city in 636 C.E. He omits any mention of the Jewish presence in, and rule over, parts of Palestine and Jerusalem between the thirteenth and eleventh centuries B.C.E. and between 586 B.C.E. and the fifth and sixth centuries C.E., and the place of Jerusalem—and the Land of Israel in general—in the Jewish national and religious imagination during the following fifteen centuries in the Diaspora.

ABU SITTA CONCLUDES HIS narrative section with a brief exposition about how "his" Palestine can be re-constituted. He notes that a prerequisite is the "re-recording" of Palestine as it was before the *Nakba*, to which the *Atlas* itself is a major contribution. The "physical reconstruction" of Palestine can then follow. He seems to believe that the mere fact of accurately (or inaccurately) recording Palestine's vanished villages and towns is a giant step toward their re-constitution. His "reconstruction" will be characterized by a massive refugee return to the original villages and towns.

Abu Sitta once wrote that the "right of return" of refugees is already enshrined in the Magna Carta of 1215. The Palestinians certainly see it as embodied in U.N. General Assembly Resolution 194, from December 11, 1948, which stated that "the [Palestinian] refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date." (The resolution also offered the alternative, for those "choosing not to return," of "compensation.")

The resolution was a belated spin-off of Count Bernadotte's plan, the Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator on Palestine, of September 16, 1948. Indeed, Bernadotte had been pressing Israel to allow back refugees, and to recognize in principle a "right of return," already from June 1948. It was in response to Bernadotte that the Israeli Cabinet formally resolved in July that no return would be allowed "while [the] state of war [is] continuing, as [this] would mean introduction of [a] Fifth Column," and that the whole matter could be resolved only within the framework of a full fledged Arab-Israeli peace settlement and in linkage with the resolution of the problem raised by the confiscation of Jewish property by, and the exodus of Jewish communities from, the Arab states.

In the decades that ensued, Israeli governments have consistently rejected the refugees' "right of return" and their actual return, arguing that a mass return would, militarily and demographically-politically, pose a dire threat to Israel's existence. An acceptance of the principle, former Prime Minister Ehud Barak recently argued, would invite pressure for a staggered mass return, even if it only began as a trickle. Given Israel's current demography, with 5 million Jews and 1.2 million Arabs, the return of 3.6 to 5 million refugees would undermine the country's Jewish nature and basis, and transform the country into a bi-national state. Certainly it would precipitate violence and chaos as refugees tried to return to specific sites. Given Arab birth rates, such a state would in short order turn into an Arab-majority state, from which the Jews would instantly or gradually emigrate. For Israel, in sum, the acceptance of the right of return would be tantamount to national suicide.

With the emergence of the PLO in the mid-1960s, the Palestinian leaders enshrined the "right of return" in their "National Covenant" and Palestinian leaders, Arafat and Abu Mazen, have reiterated like a catechism their demand for Israeli, and international, acceptance of this "right." Occasionally, in public, in English, and in private with Western interlocutors, Palestinian leaders (including Arafat) have vaguely hinted that this demand could be tempered by "taking account of Israel's demographic concerns." And Palestinian spokesmen have often insisted that the "burning issues" in this context are Lebanon's stateless 350,000-strong refugee community and the refugees in Gaza, who number about one million souls. But none—except for Sari Nusseibeh, the president of Al Quds University—has ever publicly renounced or waived the principle. (Nusseibeh is regularly denounced by Hamas and occasionally by Fatah figures.)

ABU SITTA MAINTAINS THAT most of Israel's rural and urban expansion since 1948 has occurred in the areas—5 to 7 percent of Palestine's land surface—previously owned by Jews. Moreover, "the remarkable fact is that the sites of 90 percent [of] Palestinian villages are still vacant and that a further 7 percent are on the edge of Israeli expansion which can be remedied." Hence, he maintains, the rural refugees can simply return to their village sites. No problem. As for the formerly Arab urban centers—Haifa, Jaffa, Jerusalem, Lydda, Ramle, Acre, and so on—where Jews moved into Arab housing and then expanded the towns (sometimes three- and five-fold), Abu Sitta provides detailed maps that highlight the still-uninhabited areas where the urban refugees could return and re-settle. "Without going into too much detail," he tells us, "it is clear that restoration of [the refugees to] Safad, Tiberias, Beisan, Beersheba and Majdal (Ashkelon) poses no problem." Again, no problem. And so, too, in the areas of Lydda, Ramle, and Isdud (Ashdod). He admits to "a problem" regarding Jaffa-Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, but concludes that a "solution for these two difficult cases can be found in solutions already successfully applied in Kosovo, Bosnia, Cyprus, South Africa and other places of conflict." He does not tell us what those "solutions" were. To

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the best of my knowledge, the Turkish expulsion of Greeks from northern Cyprus has never been reversed, and these Greeks were simply absorbed by their brethren and settled in the south of the island. And the "difficult cases" of Bosnia and Kosovo have not yet been successfully resolved.

Abu Sitta implies that the return of refugees to each site would not involve the displacement of the existing Jewish populations. But he also more than implies that, for such a re-transformation of Palestine to be affected, the former territory of "Israel" will need to be fused with the West Bank and Gaza into one bi-national entity—in other words, the Jewish State will have to disappear. "Steady and lasting progress can only be built on solid foundations of justice," he tells us. And "justice," of course, is justice for Palestinians. He approvingly quotes Meron Benvenisti: "What we have to do is to try to reach a situation of personal and collective equality within the framework of one overall regime throughout the country." By "one overall regime," however, Abu Sitta means one Arab-Jewish state in all of Palestine, with an Arab majority.

Thus Abu Sitta fails completely to engage with the problem of how two peoples, after warring for over a century and infused with a great deal of mutual hatred, and with vast gulfs dividing them (language, culture, religion, behavioral and political norms, economic conditions), can live at peace with one another within one political entity; and fails even to consider the will of the current majority, which has no desire to live, in parity or as a minority, with another people under one political roof and who are sure that a mass refugee return would negatively transform, and possibly destroy, their lives, personally and collectively; and fails to come to grips with the fact that, with the addition of millions of Palestinian refugees, the country between the Jordan and the Mediterranean would be one of the most crowded countries on earth; and fails to address the tremendous infrastructural costs and other problems that such a contemplated return and re-organization of Palestine would thrust upon the two communities, the region, and the world.

For Abu Sitta, this—twenty-two Arab states plus a new Arab Palestine, and no Jewish state—represents justice. And not justice only for the Arabs, but also for humankind itself: "The meaning for [i.e., of] the full restoration of Palestine for the future of humanity is immeasurable. It shows that justice wins in the end, that justice lasts and that justice is worth waiting for. In the small domain of Palestine, this achievement would be a partial but satisfactory compensation for the long tragedy of the Nakba and other ills of human behavior." Abu Sitta seems to believe that resolving the Palestine problem in a manner agreeable to the Arabs would bring peace to the Middle East, and even peace to the world. I doubt it. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

continued from page 4

IT'S A WASH

ADAM B. KUSHNER WRITES THE compelling moral case against rebuilding New Orleans, but I have another ("Sunken Cost," October 3). In the course of describing the evacuation preparations undertaken in Texas before Hurricane Rita, a reporter on one broadcast noted that, unlike New Orleans, the emergency electrical generators at Houston's hospitals were all on upper floors. What? Yes, it seems that, in New Orleans, which is under sea level, the generators were either in basements or at ground level. If that's true, here is the other reason for not rebuilding the Crescent City—the terminal stupidity of its design.

MICHAEL G. DWORKIN
Southfield, Michigan

HERO SELF-WORSHIP

IT IS ABSURD THAT A WRITER FROM THE NEW REPUBLIC would degrade Bill Clinton for spending his resources and time on some of the most important issues: globalization, AIDS, and poverty ("Second Coming," October 3). I wonder if the author, Michael Crowley, has a problem with open discussions among the rich, famous, and politically powerful about pressing world issues. Why does he belittle someone for trying to do something positive? Usually, conferences like these cater only to business interests. Next time you decide to degrade someone for doing charity work, think about the people reaping the benefit of Clinton's conference and whether they would applaud this effort or mock it. I don't care if he is narcissistic; I care that he cares.

KARA A. KEATING
Chicago, Illinois

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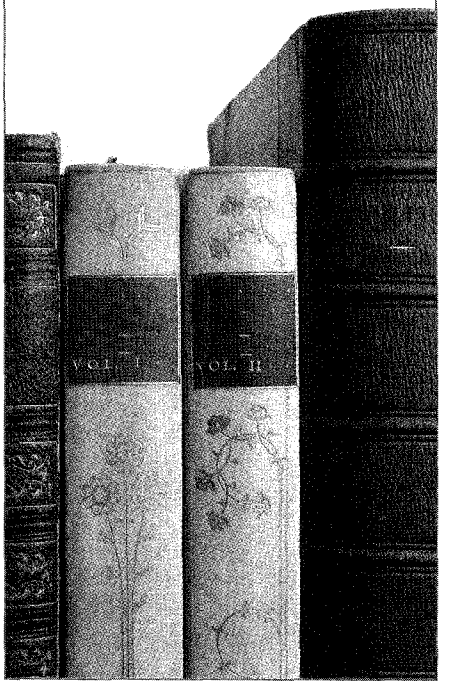

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CAPE TOWN DIARIST

Criminal Records

A FEW WEEKS AGO, A TERrifying story made the rounds in the affluent suburbs outside of Cape Town. Six masked men brandishing knives, clubs, and guns had broken into the home of a divorcée in the verdant Kenilworth neighborhood just below Table Mountain. Disabling the alarm, the gang ransacked the house, threatened to rape her two teenaged daughters, and plunged knives into a lump in the bed that they mistook for her sleeping husband. (It turned out to be a pile of pillows.) Just before fleeing in a pickup truck, the gang demanded that the woman surrender a gold ring. She tugged at it but couldn't wrench it loose. One of the thieves, according to the story, then did the unthinkable. He chopped off her finger.

THE REPORT SENT A COLLECTIVE SHUDder across this majestic city at the bottom of the world, where whites still live—or try to live—the same sheltered existence that they enjoyed during the days of apartheid. Sequestered behind high walls and electric gates in neighborhoods hidden from Cape Town's dreary townships and squatter camps, protected by armed "rapid response" teams and elaborate security systems, most whites still dwell in a cocoon of privilege. But the veneer of invulnerability is falling away. Cape Town, despite its beauty, has always been a high-crime city: Cape Flats, home to hundreds of thousands of Afrikaans-speaking "coloreds," has been plagued by vicious, drug-related gang warfare for years, and the city's murder rate is among the highest in the world. (Although the number of homicides declined by almost 6 percent in the year ending last March, the body count was still staggering at 2,680.) One wag I talked to says that the city combines the coastline of Rio de Janeiro, the epicurean spirit of Provence, and the crime rate of inner-city Detroit.

BANTRY BAY, A ONCE-PRISTINE BEACH community that rises along the Atlantic Ocean bluffs just southwest of central Cape Town, has become a no-go area at night; jogging there at sunset one weekday a couple of months ago, I nearly stumbled over a fresh corpse lying face up in the street. (I later found out that the man had been drinking, fell, and broke his neck.) Rape and drug crimes are on the rise. Cape Town's main symbol, Table Mountain, has become a danger zone: Attacks on the isolated trails that wind up its steep slopes have grown so frequent that hikers are warned never to walk alone. Locals even refer to the *Cape Times* as the "Cape Crimes" because of the number of stories about murders, assaults, and rapes on its front page.

WHEN APARTHEID ENDED AND THE LEGAL barriers to internal migration came down in 1994, hundreds of thousands of impoverished people flooded into Western Cape province in search of work. The newcomers included not only Xhosa tribespeople who had been sequestered in the nearby "independent homelands" of Transkei and Ciskei, but also illegal immigrants from Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Congo, and other neighboring countries. Many of these destitute newcomers poured into squatter camps located on the margins of affluent white neighborhoods. With the new proximity has come rampant criminality.

AFTER ARRIVING IN CAPE TOWN FOR *Newsweek* in August, my family and I rented a house for a month in Hout Bay, where well-off whites live in large, gated villas reminiscent of Marin County, California. Just down the road, thousands of Xhosa are jammed into a cluster of corrugated tin and cardboard shacks called the Mandela squatter camp. Tensions have grown sharply in recent months. Two weeks ago, the Hout Bay Neighborhood Watch group fanned out across our street, warning that break-ins and armed robberies carried out by residents of the Mandela camp had reached epidemic levels. "The Cape Town City Council is not controlling the [squatter] settlement," a pamphlet they distributed declared.

THAT SAME DAY, THE WHITES TOOK MATters into their own hands: They welded shut an iron gate leading out of the Mandela camp that they claimed had been used by robbers to enter their wealthy neighborhood. Problem was, the gate had also provided easy access to that neighborhood for hundreds of noncriminal domestics and other laborers, who were now forced to slog a circuitous mile through steep hills to get to work. After midnight, 400 angry residents descended on the gate, chased away guards, and ripped it down. "They penned us up like it was apartheid all over again," one squatter told me. "How did they expect we would react?"

IN THE CURRENT ATMOSPHERE OF FEAR and anxiety, it's often hard to tell what's real and what's exaggeration. A few days after the finger-amputation story broke, a modified version trickled out: The digit wasn't chopped off, merely bitten through to the bone. Then came another adaptation: The thief had scraped the woman's knuckle and perhaps torn a ligament, but hadn't even drawn blood. The horror stories circulating in the suburbs may reflect white paranoia as much as the breakdown of law and order.

EVEN SO, WE'RE NOT TAKING ANY chances. Last month we left Hout Bay and took a long-term lease on a house in Tokai, a lovely neighborhood perched in the hills above some of Cape Town's oldest vineyards. Before moving in, we hired a security firm to assess our "security needs." Fernando Louw, our consultant, grimly pointed out the flimsy fences that surrounded our property, the thick woods above the house, and the 300 yards of pasture that separated us from our neighbors. "You're highly vulnerable," he told us. His solution: magnetic contacts on all of our doors and windows, infrared motion detectors, six outdoor laser beams, six stationary "panic buttons" distributed through the house, two panic buttons that we're supposed to wear around our necks, plus sirens and radio alarms that alert our rapid-response team that we're in trouble. Total price tag? Nearly $6,000. We settled for a scaled-down version, at half the price, which Louw said would "probably" keep us safe. But I've noticed that my wife has taken to slipping her wedding ring off her finger and placing it on the night table before bedtime—just in case.

JOSHUA HAMMER

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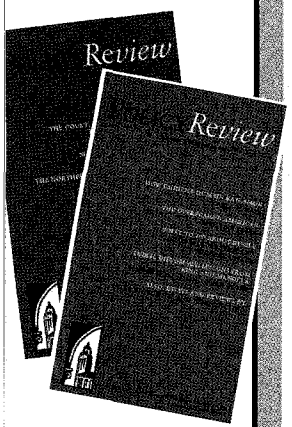

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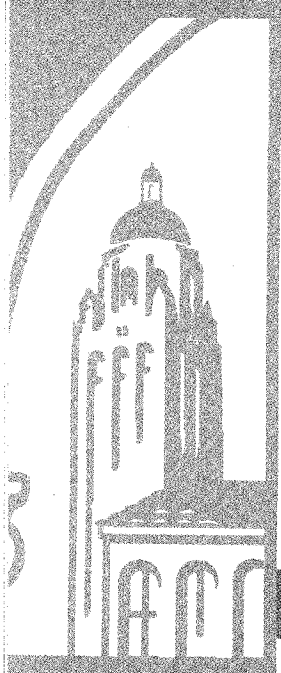

In the new issue of *Policy Review*

The Overpraised American

Christopher Lasch's* The Culture of Narcissism *revisited

Today, a book about the vagaries of the American character might still have a great deal to say about narcissism, but its subtitle would likely point to something other than diminishing expectations. It would, perhaps, document "Life in the Age of the Overpraised American," for praise (and its kin, attention-seeking) is our common cultural currency. If, in the twentieth century, "character" gave way to "personality," as Lasch and others such as Richard Sennett and Anthony Giddens argued, then in the twenty-first century "personality" exists only if it is broadcast, rated, praised, and consumed by as many people as possible—put on display for strangers as well as intimates.

—Christine Rosen

Public Diplomacy: Lessons from King and Mandela

Restoring America's image around the world

To be sure, there are manifest differences between the circumstances in which Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela operated and the conduct of public diplomacy by the United States government. King and Mandela were individual charismatic figures whose public causes and public messages were intimately connected with their personal styles and characters. By contrast, public diplomacy is conducted by, or at the instigation of, a government. Despite the differences, the efforts of King and Mandela and of public diplomacy share the central concern of effective marketing of public goods: civil rights, racial equality, and the end of apartheid in the King/Mandela context; democratic values, open societies, and competitive markets in the context of U.S. public diplomacy.

—Charles Wolf Jr. & Brian Rosen

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WHETHER THROUGH CALLS FOR IMMOBILITY AND STAGNATION OR CALLS FOR A LEAP INTO DARKNESS AND RECKLESS ADVENTURE."

– The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz

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- *Held municipal elections in the 178 municipal councils in the Kingdom's 13 provinces*
- *Established the King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue to bring together leading personalities to publicly discuss important issues facing Saudi Arabia*
- *Established the National Human Rights Association with a mandate to implement international human rights charters*
- *Enacted the Saudi Arabian Capital Markets Law, setting up the Saudi Arabian Securities and Exchange Commission to protect investor interests; and formalizing the Saudi Arabian Stock Exchange, which is today the largest emerging market*
- *Established the Foreign Investment Law to encourage direct foreign investment*

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